The Cobler of

Caunterburie,

Or

An Inuectiue against Tarltons Newes *out of Purgatorie.*

A merrier Ieſt then a Clownes Iigge, and *fitter for Gentlemens humors.*

Publiſhed with the coſt of a dickar of Cowe hides.

AT LONDON,
Printed by Robert Robinſon.
1590.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·
DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA

The Coblers

Epistle, to the Gentlemen Readers.

Hall a Hall (Gentlemen) roome for a Cobler, here comes the quainteſt ſquire in all Kent; The Cobler of *Caunterburie*, armde with his Aul, his Lingel, and his Laſt, preſents himſelfe a Iudiciall Cenſor of other mens writinges: but mee thinkes, for my ſaucineſſe, I heare *Apelles* boy crying, *Ne ſutor vltra crepidam*. If I doe ſee his Maiſter mend the fault in the legge, Ile abide his frumpes, and when hee hath done, Ile ſay this had not been corrected but for the Cobler. Becomes not many a Tinker a tall Pratler? & haue not men of my Trade waded ſo deepe in the ſecretes of Theology, that they haue ſought to correct *Magnificat*? & then by your leaue gentlemen, may not the Cobler of Kent who hath been the Patron of many good companions, and toſt ouer a paire of cards at

Trumpe from morning till night, not to be admitted so farre as to finde fault with *Richard Tarltons newes out of Purgatorie?* Yes, & if he that writ it wil not amend the latchet, Ile on with my night-cap and my spectacles, and make him shape the leg righter ere I haue done. I confesse tis a booke, and so is the Colliers Iade of Croyden a Horse as well as the Courtiers Courser: yet by my faith it hath a faire Title: but if *Diogenes* saw it, hee would cry out as hee did against *Minda*, stop your Citty that it runne not out of the gates; and inferre a like Inuectiue against the Booke, for that the Title conteines more then the whole Pamphlet: but yet in faith there is pretty stuffe in it, but vnworthy Dicke Tarltons humour: some where too low for Iestes, somewhere too hie for stile, If I distinguish like a Scholler, Gentlemen, think e that I was borne when the Popes butterflies were abroad, and it may be, some Friar was my father, and the rather I gesse it, for that nature hath wrought that vpon my crowne, that he had on his by Art: for before I was twenty, I had a bald pate. Well howsoeuer, I haue found fault, and therefore haue I attempted to amende it, not in the correcting of his worke, but in setting out one more pleasant, and more full of delightfull tales for all mens humours: except those which are so humorous that they count nothing gracious, but that is too graue. What? a Dogge hath a day: *Semel in Anno ridet Apollo*. Longer liues a merry man then a sad; a Cobler hath lesse cares then a King: and an

hower

hower past in honest myrth, is worth a tunne full of melancholy. Why were Tauernes inuented, but to ripen mens wits? And why were tales deuised, but to make men pleasant? Tush when *Redde rationem* comes, I feare me there will be lesse account to be giuen for honest recreation, then either for the enuious practises that solemne Saturnistes ruminate: or for the sundry schismes the melancholy michers doe publish. If my Principles bee false, let no man take exceptions, but passe it ouer with a smile: for tis but Coblers Philosophie. But I digresse, and therefore to my booke, wherein are contained the tales that were tolde in the Barge betweene Billinsgate and Graues end: Imitating herein old Father Chaucer, who with the like Methode set out his Caunterbury tales: but as there must be admitted no compare between a cup of Darby ale, and a dish of durty water: So syr Ieffrey Chaucer is so hie aboue my reach, that I take *Noli altum sapere*, for a warning, and onely looke at him with honour and reuerence. Here is a gallimaufre of all sorts, the Gentlemen may finde *Salem*, to sauour their eares with Iestes: and Clownes plaine dunstable dogrell to make them laugh, while their leather buttons flie off. When the Farmer is set in his Chaire turning (in a winters euening) the crabbe in the fier, heere may hee heare how his sonne can reade, and when he hath done laugh while his belly akes. The olde wiues that wedded themselues to the profound histories of Robin hood, Clim of the

Clough, and worthy syr Isenbras: may here learne a tale to tell amongst their Gossippes. Thus haue I sought to feed all mens Fancies: which if I doe, was it not well done of a Cobler? If I offend, and they think there is in it neither rime, nor reason, why? a Cobler did it, and theres an end.

Farewell from my Shop where soeuer it be.

¶ Robin Goodfellowes *Epistle.*

A Cobler become a Corrector? Ho, Ho, Ho: it was not so when Robin Goodfellow *was a Ruffler, and helpt the countrie wenches to grinde their Mault: Then gentlemen, the Ploughswaine medled with his Teame: the Gentlemã with his Hound & his Hawke: the Artificer with his labour: & the Scholler with his booke: euery degree cõtented him within his limits. But now the world is growne to that passe, that Pierce Plowman will prie into lawe, naie into Diuinitie, and his duncerie must needs be doctrine: tush, what of higher powers? what of Vniuersities? the text to put downe them,* Babes & Sucklings, *and no more. This makes* Robin Goodfellow *that was so merry a spirit of the Butterie, to leaue all and keepe himselfe in Purgatorie, for Hospitalitie is so cleane run out of the Countrie, that he needs not now helpe the maids to grinde mault, for the drinke is so small that it needes little corne: and if he should helpe them, where he was woont to finde a messe of Creame for his labour, he should scarse get a dish of sloate Milke. Why? see you not how cranke the Cobler is, that will forsooth correct* Dick Tarltons *doings, a man famous in his life for merrie conceits, and especially a Booke of my publishing? well Gentlemen, if you suffer it, and* Dick Tarlton *pocket it vp without a reuenge, or a drie blowe at his breeche,* Robin Goodfellow *makes a vowe, to haunt him in his sleepe, and after his olde merrie humour, so to playe the knaue with the Cobler, that hee shall repent hee medled so farre beyonde his latchet. But I will carrie my friends these*

newes

newes to Purgatorie, where I know for anger he will almoſt breake his Taber, and will not reſt till he haue reuenged: we will lay both our wits together, to put downe the paltring Cobler, and heere I make a vowe, either to get the conqueſt, or els neuer to come in your ſightes: and to ſay as I was woont: What Hmp and Hampe, heere will I neuer more grinde nor ſtampe.

Yours in choller, *Robin* Goodfellow.

The Cobler of Caunterburie.

Itting at the barge in Billingsgate expecting when the tide woulde serue for Graues ende, diuers passengers of all sortes resorted thither to goe downe: at last it began to ebbe, and then they cried away; whē I came to the staires although I was resolued to goe downe in a tilt boate; yet seeing what a crue of madde companions went in the barge, and perceiuing by the winde there was no feare of raine, I stept into the barge and toke vp my seate amongst the thickest: with that the bargemen put from the staiers, and hauing a strong ebbe, because there had much raine water fallen before, they went the more merrily downe, and scarse had we gotten beyond saint Katherins, but that a perry of winde blewe some thing loude, that the watermen hoist vp sailes and laide by their Oares from labour. Being thus vnder saile, going so snugly downe, it made vs all so merry, that wee fel to chat some of one thing and some of an other, al of mirth, many of knauery; that if Cato Censorius had been there, he woulde either haue laughed at their knauish iests, or else at the confusion of their prattles, which seemed like a very Chaos of sundry conceites. As thus euery man was striuing to passe away the time pleasantly, a gen-

tleman puld out of his sleeue a little pamphlet and began to reade to himselfe: amongst the rest my selfe was so bold, as to aske him what book it was: marry quoth he, a swlish toy called Tarltons newes out of Purgatory, at this they fell to descanting of the booke, some commended it highly, and saide it was good inuention and fine tales: tush quoth an other most of them are stolne out of Boccace Decameron: for all that quoth the third, tis prety and witty. As they were thus commending and discommending, there sate by an auncient man that was a Cobler in Caunterbury: maisters quoth he, I haue read the booke, and tis indifferent, like a cup of bottle ale halfe one and halfe the other: but tis not merry inough for Tarltons vaine, nor stuffed with his fine conceites, therefore it shall passe for a booke and no more. Mono what say you to old father Chaucer, how like you of his Caunterburie tales, are they not pleasant to delight and witty to instruct, and full of conceited learning to shewe the excellencie of his wit? All men commended Chaucer as the father of English Poets, and saide, that he shot a shoote which many haue aimed at but neuer reacht to. Well quoth the Cobler, nowe that wee are going to Graues-end, and so I thinke most of vs to Caunterbury, let vs tell some tales to passe away the time till wee come off the water, and we will call them Caunterburie tales. To this motiō the whole company willingly consented and onely they stood vpon this, who should begin: If it be no offence quoth the Cobler, to other gentlemen that be here, I my selfe will be ringleader: to this they all agreed, and the Cobler began to settle himselfe: yet before her beginne, I will as neere as I can describe you what manner of man he was.

The description of the Cobler.

HIs stature was large and tall,
His limbs well set withall.

Of

Of a ſtrong bone and a broad cheſt,
He was wide and wildſome in the breſt,
His forehead hie and a bald pate,
Well I wote he was a mate
That had loued well a bonnie Laſſe,
For the Lownes eies were as gray as glaſſe:
And oft haue I heard my mother ſay,
The wanton eie is ere moſt gray.
He loued well a cup of ſtrong Ale,
For his noſe was nothing pale:
But his ſnout and all his face,
Was as red as ruby or Topace.
A voice ſhee had cleare and lowde,
And well he gan ſing to a crowde.
He was a ſtout ſturdie ſquire,
And loued week daie good compire.
Drinke he would with euerie man,
In cup, cruſe, glaſſe, or can:
And what euerie daie he got,
He hoorded vp in the Alepot:
That all Caunterburie gan lere,
To talke of this merrie Coblere.
Therefore now marke me well,
For thus his tale he gan to tell.

The Coblers tale,

Conteining the merrie ieſtes paſſed betweene the Prior of Caunterburie, and a Smith of Saint Auſtins.

THe Prior of Caunterburie had a couent of Frier Auguſtines that were indued with great linings, for the king and hee himſelfe had great reuenues, that he liued like a Potentate and was had in great eſtimation throughout all the

Citie: Liuing thus at ease pampred vp with delicates and idlenes the two Nurses of Lechery, hee minded not so much his booke, but that passing one day through the stretes, he glaunced his eies to see where he might finde some handsome trull that might be his Paramour: many he sawe and many he liked, but at last comming by a Smiths forge, he spied a proper tall woman meanly attired after the pouerty of hir husband; but of such a beautifull visage and faire countenance, that shee pleased greatly the Priors eie, that he thought hir the fairest in all Caunterburie: he returned home that way hee went out, because he would haue an other loke at the Smiths wife, and as hee passed by he gaue hir a curtesie for his farewell. Well home he went to his Chamber, & there he bethought him of his new loue, and cast in his minde a thousand waies how he might come to his purpose: At last hee sent for the Smith to come loke on his horse, who very hastily hied him to the Priory, where the Prior welcommed him and intertained him with great curtesie, killing the Nurse (as the olde prouerbe is) for the childs sake, and making much of blacke Vulcan for faire Venus sake: the poore Smith very carefully lokt to the horse, and where ought was amisse amended it: The Prior and all his Couent gaue him great commendations and thankes, and bidde him into breakefast, where he had good cheare and store of strong drink, which made the Smith passing pleasant: as they sate at breakefast the Prior tolde him, sith they had made experience of his skill, and that he was cunning about horses, he was content to make him Farrier for the Priorie: At this the Smith was very glad: Nay more quoth the Prior because thou shalt haue more gaines out of the Doorter, seeing thy wife is a good cleanly woman, shee shal be Landresse for mee, and the whole Couent. The Smith hearing this, perceiued by the weathercocke which way the wind blew, shakt the head and began to smile: The Prior

or demannded of him why he laught: marry syr quoth he, seeing we are at meate, and mirth is good for digestion, I will tell you a merry Iest. There was such a poore man as my selfe that dwelt as I doe hard by a Priory, and he had brought vp in his house a litle Lambe, which growing to a sheepe would wander all abroade and returne home safe at night without any hurt; at last this litle sheepe beeing the poore mans treasure, seeing the Priory gate open and the yarde full of grasse went in and fedde there: The wanton Fryars that were idle, would oft sport with the Lambe and play withall, and pulled off the woll of the backe, that it had almost left nothing but the bare pelt; which the poore man espying kept vp his sheep and would not suffer it to go any more abroad: yet it had gotten such a sweet sauour in the Priory yarde, that assone as it brake lose, it would thither; where the Prior and the Fryars spying it againe, consented and eate it vp all: the good man came to aske for his sheepe, and they laughing at him gaue him no other mendes but the hornes: So my Maisters if my wife should bee your Landresse, I warrant you, if I came to inquire for her, I might haue such fees as the poore man had for his losse: No, no I am well I thanke you, if my selfe may serue for a Farrier so it is, but my wife (of all men shall not haue to deale either with Priors or Fryars. At this they all laught, but the Prior not willing to giue ouer the chase, thus made this answere. Why Smith (quoth he) thou art a fole, thou maist haue a prouiso for that, for though shee wash our clothes, yet shee shall neither fetch them nor bring them home, neither shall there euer a Fryar come at thy house, onely the Scull of the kitchin, and I hope thou feareſt not him. No quoth the Smith, they bee these breechlesse yeomen that I stand so much in doubt of: but vpon these conditions aforesaide, that shee shall neither fetch them nor carry them home, shee shalbe your Landresse, vpon this

they agréd, and the Smith went to his house and tolde his wife all. Shée that was a wily wench thought with hir selfe that whatsoeuer hir husband sight for he would catch a frog; and that dealt hee neuer so warily, yet shée woulde make him one of the head men of the parish as well as his neighbours. Shée conjecturing thus with hir selfe, the next morning came the Scull early (by that the Smith was vp and at his worke) with foule clothes, God spæde syr quoth he. I haue brought your wife the Priors linnen; ah welcome good fellow quoth he, goe thy waies vp the Chamber to my wife, shée is aboue, and I thinke a bed: the Scul frotted vp the staires & saluted the woman: Mistres quoth he, the Prior hath sent you his cloathes & praies you they may bee done on wednesday next: they shall be done quoth shée with all spæde: and quoth the Scull, his worship wild me in secrete to giue you a Ring for a token, and to desire you to thinke that he loues you as heartily as any woman in the worlde; the pore woman seeing a gold Ring, and hauing neuer had any before in hir life, helde hir selfe a proude woman, and bethought her what good gifts shée should daily haue if shée had such a louer as the Prior: wherefore shée returned him this answere by the Scull, ỹ shée had euer thought well of him, but hir husband was a iealous fole & watcht hir narrowly wheresoeuer shée went, but as far as shée might, shée was his at command. Home went the Scul, and the Prior was risen by that hee returned, and askt him what newes: what newes quoth the Scull, marry thus syr, assone as I came to the dore I founde the Smith hard at his worke, and I saluted him by the time of the day, and asked him where his wife was, saying, I had brought the Priors linnen. Goe vp the staires, good fellow quoth he, for I thinke my wife is in bed, and syr there indæde I found hir, and truely syr if you will beléeue me, me thought shée lay too lowely in hir bed to lie with a Smith, so syr I gaue hir your token and tolde hir

what

what you bad me: and she made answere that your wor-ship was the man whom shee had euer thought well of, but hir husband was a iealous fole, yet as farre as shee could shee was at his commaund. This satisfied the Pri-ors expectation, and on wednesday morning when the Scull shoulde goe for his cleane linnen, the Prior com-pounded with him and gaue him a brase of Angels to keepe his counsaile: saying, Tom (for so was the Sculs name) thou knowest al flesh is fraile, and we are men as well as others, though our profession be more holy, ther-fore Tom so it is, ý I haue loued the Smiths wife a long time, & now may I haue opportunity to fill my desires, I wil this morning take thy clothes on, & besmeare my face and with the basket hie for the cleane clothes, onely I care for nothing if thou keepe my counsaile. Feare not that syr, quoth the Scull, but I will bee so secrete as you can desire: with that the Prior was briefe for because he longd to be there, and on with the Sculs rags, and taking his basket on his necke, hied him very orderly to the Smiths house by that time day did appeare, where he found him hard at worke: God morrow syr quoth the Prior, I am come for the linnen, goe vp the staires fel-low quoth the Smith, thou commest very early, my wife is yet in bed. Vp trudgd the Prior, and there he founde his Paramour in a sweete sleepe, the Prior stept to hir and kist hir, and with that shee wakte, and seeing the Scull, why how now syr sauce, quoth shee, can you not speake before you come vp: my husband is a wise man to send such companions vp into the Chamber where I am in bedde, twere no matter and the match were equall, to make him weare the horne for it. Oh bee con-tent good loue quoth the Prior, for knowe I am not Tom the Scull, but the Prior himselfe that sent thee the Ring, who for thy sake is come thus disguised: with that he discouered himselfe, and shee perceiued it was he and blusht: hee kist hir, and so conioyed hir, that while the

poore Smith was knocking at the Smithy he had dubbed him knight of the forked order, and for feare of suspition putting his linnen in the basket away he went, bidding the Smith farewell. Thus the Priors and the Smiths wife contented and inioying their hearts desire, the poore Smith loued hir not a whit the worse, neither did he suspect any thing, for the blind eates many a flie, and much water runs by the mill that the miller wottes not on: so plaid it with this Smith, for twise a weeke came the Prior in his Sculs apparrell to his lemmon, thus it continued till on one morning the Prior was not well, so that he could not goe; but Tom Scul after his wonted manner went to carry foorth the linnen, and as hee went by the way, he began to thinke with himselfe what a faire woman the Smiths wife was, and how faine he would be partaker with his Maister, hammering this in his head, on hee went to the Smiths house: Howe Smith quoth he good morrow, is thy wife vp. No quoth the Smith but shee is awake, goe vp and carry your linnen a Gods name: Vp came the Scull, and rushing in at the Chamber doore threw downe his basket, and seeing the Chamber darke that he could not be discouered, slipt to bed and entred Commens with the Prior, and with that got him away without saying one worde: The Smiths wife maruailed at this, and supposing that hee had heard some ruffling, and for feare of hir husband had gone away so hastily. Well within two daies after came the Prior againe, and after his accustomed maner went vp with his basket and saluted hir after the old fashion: I pray you tell me maister Prior quoth shee, what meant you yesterday morning that you came so quiet, and slipt away with such silence after you got out of bed: by this the Prior perceiued that the Scull had cut a shiue on his loaf, and so thought to dissemble the matter. Faith sweet heart quoth he, I heard a noise, and thought it had beene thy husband that had come vp so I coniectured quoth

the

the Smiths wife, and therefore after you were gone, seeing you were freighted with your owne shadowe I laught hartily: thus as long as they durst they chatted, but at last the Prior up with his basket and away. When he came home, in a great chafe hee sent for the Scull and made inquiry of the matter, the poore fellow afraide of sore threatninges, confessed the matter and craude pardon: but the Prior forgetting his patience fell vpon poore Tom the Scull and beate him so sore, that he had almost kild him: afterwards swearing him on a booke, if euer after hee went with any clothes, hee should go no further then the Chamber doore. The Scul agréd to this, and confirmd it with a solemne oath: but the remembrance of his sore blowes, bred him a minde to reuenge: whereupon resoluing to doe any mischiefe to the Prior that he might, one day he went very orderly to his Smith and carried him to the Alehouse, and there after a long protestation of silence, reuealed the whole matter vnto him, how the Prior euery day came in his apparrell to his wife, and so made him weare the horns whiles he was busie about his hammers: at this the Smith fetcht a great sigh; alas quoth he, and am I a Cuckolde? why not you quoth the Scul, as well as your betters? Indéede quoth the Smith, that is all the comfort that I haue, that my betters haue had as hard hap: for the Abbot of saint Peters that is an holy man, had but one Lemman, and yet shée was not content with twenty morsels: and I am a poore Smith & a lay man, no maruaile then if my fortune be as forked as the rest: but by the holy Rode of Rochester quoth he, I will bee so reuengd on the Prior, that after I haue taken him, he shall hate Lechery the worse while he liues. I but quoth the Scul, take héede thou plaguest not me in stéede of the Prior. To auoid therefore all insuing danger, if I come to morrow thou shalt knowe mee by this token, I will aske thée whether thou hast drunke this morning or no:

if thou heareſt no ſuch watchword, then knowe it is the Prior. So bee it quoth the Smith, and vpon this they drunke their drinke and departed. The next morning the Smith was early at his worke, and the Prior that longde to be with his Lemmon was aſſone awake, and vp hee got, and on with the Sculs apparrell, and to the Smiths houſe, and after his accuſtomed maner bad him good morrow and vp the ſtaires. The Smith perceiuing it was the Prior, becauſe hee wanted his watchworde, hied vp preſently after him, and toke the Prior in bed with his wife: why how nowe Scull quoth hee? will no worſe meate go downe with you then my wife? Before you and I part, I will learne you howe you make Vulcan of mee without you were more like Mars then you be. Whereupon his man and he (two lusty knaues) ſtept to him and puld him out of bed, and thruſt him in a great ſacke wherein he was wont to put chaffe: when he had done, carried him into the ſtréet, and laid him downe before his doore, and then made his wife take a flaile in hir hand, and threſh as hard as ſhée coulde: but becauſe hee perceiued hir ſtroakes were laide on with fauour, himſelfe ſtode behind hir with a great Carters whip, and euery time ſhée fainted in hir blowes hee lent hir a laſh, that he fetcht the bloud through hir petticoate: the people that came by marualled at this Antick, and aſkt the Smith, what he was a doing? killing of fleas quoth the Smith, that I found this morning in my bedde, and becauſe my wife is ſo idle and will not ſtrike home, I ſtand with my whip to whet hir on. Neighbours therefore giue good eare, and marke the end, and ſée when my wife hath beaten them enough what foul fleas they be, and by my example learne whenſoeuer you take ſuch great fleas in your wiues bedde, to put them to the like punishment. The people flocked together to ſée this ſport, and although the Prior was almoſt bruiſed to death (though for fauouring of him the Smiths wife

boze many a lash) yet he durst not cry for feare of further discredit, but lay still and suffered all with patience. At last a multitude of people flocking together, it chaunced that vppon serious businesse the Abbot of saint Peters came by, who seeing such a throng, sent one of his men to knowe what the matter meant. Oh may it please your Lordship quoth the Smith, such a sight as you neuer saw: wherfore for Christs sake I aske it, that you would take so much paines as to come ouer the way and see: the Abbot stept ouer the Channell, and when hee came and saw the Smiths wife with hir flaile, and him with his whip, he wondred, & the Smith told him as the rest, that it was a flea that he take in his wiues bed: all this while lay the Prior with a heauy heart, for feare the Smith shoulde shake him out of the sacke: wishing to abide twise as much torment, so hee might escape vnknowne. As the Abbot about this matter stode questioning with the Smith, the Scull that mist the Prior that past his bowre, thought the Smith had plaid some mad prancke with him, went and put on the Priors apparrell, and his Cole ouer his heade that hee might not be knowen, and went downe to the Smiths house ward, where seeing a concourse of people hee hasted him thither. At last the Smith spied him and cryed, Oh my Lord Abbot yonder comes the Prior of saint Austins, it was one of his fleas. Wel knew the Smith it was Tom Scull, but his wife supposing it to be the Prior, and that he in the sacke was the Scul that had deceiued hir, in despight for reuenge laid on such blows, that shee needed no whipping to mend hir strokes. When the Prior came, & after most humble maner had saluted the Abbot, he desired to knowe the cause of this strange sight: marry quoth the smith, Maister Prior, I may thanke you for this, for a flea of your Priory hath leapt from the Dorter to my wiues bed, and finding it there this morning, I put it in a sacke and caused my wife to thresh it, and for

that both you & Maſter Abbot, & al my neighbors ſhall ſée what parlous fleas oft happen into womens beds; I will ſhake him out before you all, & with that he vnbound the ſacke, and he threwe out the Prior, who beeing in the ſculs apparrell, was ſo beſmiered and ſo bloudy, that he could not be knowen: Loke here Maiſter Prior quoth the ſmith, here is the ſcull of your Priory. Oh notable knaue knaue quoth Tom ſcull, ſo to diſcredit our houſe, what thinke you of this my Lorde Abbot? is this a ſufficient puniſhment or no, conſidering by this fault he ſhal giue occaſion of ſlaunder to the whole Priory? He is quoth the Abbot, within the iuriſdiction of your cenſure, and therefore deale with him as you liſt. Marry quoth the ſcul then thus: becauſe it is an open fault, it ſhal haue a more open puniſhment; for if it be ſmothered vp thus, they wil ſay that I am a fauourer of ſinne: with that he cald to certaine of his couent, for moſt of the Monkes of the Priory were come thither, howe ſay you brethren quoth he, is it not beſt that he ſtand all this forenoone on the Pillory, and haue a paper written on his heade containing the whole matter of his offence? and the ſmiths wife ſhall ſtand vnder him with hir flaile, and the ſmith with his whip: and ſo quoth the ſmith ſhall all Caunterbûrie laugh at me that come into the market place to proue my ſelfe a Cuckolde. No goodman ſcull quoth he, it ſhal not be ſo, and with that he puld of his Cole and ſaid, Maſters and neighbours, ſée here is the ſcul of the houſe, and this beaten in the ſacke is the Prior himſelfe that came to my wife in the ſculs apparrell: at this all the people clapt their hands, laught & made good game, to ſée howe ſimply the Prior ſtood and in what a maieſtie the ſcull was in the Priors abiliments. At this ſight the Abbot abaſht, and the Friars were aſhaunde: but the ſcull nothing amaſed, began afore all the people to ſay thus: my Maiſters quoth hee, I was once a ſcholler, though I am now a ſcul, and then I learned this old ſaying in La-

tin:

tin; Caute, si non Caste: Liue charily, if not chastly: Bee not so forwarde in your follies that you discouer your faults to the whole worlde, and especially was this spoken to men of the Churche, for in that they knowe much, and doe dehort others from vice, the people looke their liues and their learning shoulde agree: but when they offend so grossly as Maister Prior through his ill example, to bring a whole house in slaunder, then are they worthy of double punishment: for we know Friars are men, and I warrant you, there is a great many in England haue done as much to others as he hath done to ỹ smiths wife, & yet haue scapt without discredit: I hope my Lord Abbot, if you enter into your owne conscience, you can verifie as much, and therefore seeing hee was so careleſſe of his credit, let him for euer after (to auoid perpetuall infamie of the house) be banisht out of the Priorie. To this they agreed, and the people that heard this collation said, Tom scull was worthy to be Prior: whereupon the Abbot and the Fryars consenting, and seeing he had good learning, turned away the old Prior and made Tom scull Prior in his roome: thus was the Prior punisht for his Lechery, the Smith reuengde for his Cuckoldry, and the scull for his blowes stumbled on a good promotion.

At this merry tale of the Cobler, all they in the barge laught and saide the smith was well reuenged: I but quoth the Cobler, so he was made a Cuckold, and with a heauy head was the poore smith faine to goe to his hammers, beeing euer after noted for a Cuckolde through all Caunterburie. There sate a smith hard by, who grieued at this, that hee shoulde descant so vpon his occupation, and the rather perchaunce hee toke pepper in the nose, because he was of the same fraternity, if not with a Prior, yet with some other good fellowe, and therefore in a snuffe he beganne thus to reply: Why Cobler quoth hee,

doſt thou hold the ſmith in ſuch deriſion becauſe hee was a Cuckold: I tell thée Cobler, Kinges haue woꝛe hoꝛnes: and tis a fault that Foꝛtune excepteth from none: yea, the olde wꝛiters haue had it in ſuch queſtions, that they haue ſet downe diuers degrées of Cuckoldes. I marry quoth the gentleman, Tarlton in his Purgatoꝛy hath diuided them into thꝛée ſoꝛts. Tuſh quoth the ſmith, Tarlton was a fole oꝛ hee that wꝛit the booke, foꝛ to tell you truth there bee eight degrées, and that I can pꝛoue: At this there was a great laughter, and euery man deſired him to tell what they were: that I will quoth the ſmith, they be theſe.

The eight orders of Cuckolds.

Cuckold.
1 Machomite.
2 Heretícke.
3 Lunaticke.
4 Innocent.
5 Incontinent.
6 By conſent.
7 By Act of Parliament.
8 *Quem facit Eccleſia.*

And becauſe quoth the Smith they may ſéeme darke and obſcure to you, I will bꝛiefly make an expoſition of them to you, and that is in this manner.

The expoſition of the eight degrees of Cuckolds.

1 Cuckolde Machomite is an auncient Cuckold, who hath béene married ſome thirty oꝛ foꝛty yeares, and euer ſince his fiꝛſt marriage hath continued content in that eſtate, being ſo knowen and notified amongſt his neighbours, theꝛefoꝛe being the oldeſt, he is the foꝛmoſt.

2 Cuckold Heretícke, is he that hauing a faire wife and

and honeſt, is ſo blinded with Iealouſie and ſuſpition, as he thinkes hir to be as diſhoneſt as the beſt, but indéed is none, and therefore conſumes himſelfe in an hereſie.

3 Cuckold Lunaticke, is he that being a Cuckold conceiues ſuch inward griefe, that he ſuffers his paſſions to take no reſt, but as a man diſtrackt from his ſenſes doth all things ſo out of order, as though he were Lunaticke: and therefore hath this title for his humours frenzie.

4 Cuckold Innocent, is hee that being ſimple of himſelfe ſuſpecteth nothing, but what ſoeuer hee heares of his wife, beléeueth no more then hee ſées, knowing nothing, and therefore ſuſpecting nothing.

5 Cuckold Incontinent, is hee that marries himſelfe to a wife of a light diſpoſition, who maketh him a Cuckold the very firſt day of his marriage.

6 Cuckold by conſent, is he that of al other Cuckolds is moſt infamous, who is not onely headed as brauely as the reſt, and hath one of light conuerſation, but foſtereth his wife vp in hir follies, and is content to kéepe the doore to his wiues laſciuious wantonneſſe, conſenting to more then the ſtrumpet is aſhamde to performe.

7 Cuckold by Act of Parliament, is ſuch a one that when he takes his wife faulty is not content ſecretly to puniſh the offence, but goes to lawe with the man for recompence: the Queſt giuing him perhaps for damage ſome i.d.ob. whereby it is regiſtred in the Court by his owne proofe that he is a Cuckold, and therefore is he called Cuckold by Act of Parliament.

8 Cuckolde Quem facit Eccleſia, is hee whome the Church maketh a Cuckold, and that is this, when a yong

man marrieth a maide or a wife, whome hee supposeth to be a maide, and yet hath plaid false before, and perhaps hath had a childe or two: In marrying him to such a one he is Cuckolde in the Church, and therefore called Cuckold Quem facit Ecclesia.

Thus quoth the Smith, haue you heard my degrées, and their exposition, and because I will bee quit with the Cobler for the tale of the Smith, giue me leaue a litle and you shall heare a merry Iest, but because I will let you knowe what manner of man hee was, before his tale, heare his description.

The description of the Smith.

THis Smith I weene was a quaint fire,
As merry as byrd on brier.
Iocund and gleesome at euery fith,
His countenance aie buxsome and blith,
His face was coaly and full blacke,
Hued like vnto a Colliers sacke,
Or as if it had beene soild with mier,
Full of wrinckles was his cheekes with the fier.
Well he could sweat and swinke,
And one that aie loued good drinke,
For hard by his Forge alwaies stoode
A stond of ale nappy and good:
Which made the colour of his nose,
Like to the fier when it glowes.
His head great, his browes broad,
Able to beare a great load:
As no man might hold it scorne
On his head to graft a horne.
His coates were fit for the weather,
His pilch made of swines leather:
So was his breech, and before

A dustie apron he wore:
Wherein not to faile,
Was many a horse shoo naile,
And for to fit him euerie tide,
Hung an hammer by his side,
Thus attyred the Smith gan say,
What befell on a summers day.

The Smiths tale,
Conteining a pleasant iest of a iealous Cobler, and how for all his suspition, he was cunningly made Cuckold.

IN Rumney Marshe by the sea coast, there dwelled a Cobler, a merry fellow, and of his middle age: who was woont on working dayes to chaunt it out at his worke, and on holy-dayes to bestirre his stumpes in the Churchyard so merrily after a crowd, that he was welbeloued of all the countrey wenches, and noted for the flower of good fellowship throughout all the parish. This Cobler keeping shop for himselfe, had in house with him an old mother of his, who being as it were his seruant, desirous to liue more at ease, wisht him to take a wife: the Cobler was loth to be perswaded to marriage, and the reason was, for that he feared to be a Cuckold: yet at last he cast his eye on a countrie lasse, that was a blythe and bonny wench, and the cheefe of all the maides of old Rumney: to hir was this iolly Cobler a suter, and after a little wooing (as women must be got with praises and promises) the Cobler caught her, and married they must be in all haste, which done, they liued pleasantly together, as folks do presently after their wedding: but after the honnie moone was past, she like a good huswife fell to her worke, to spin and carde, and such other deedes of huswiferie as belonged to the profite of her house: the Cobler loued hir well, and shee wanted

nothing that might ſatiſfie hir humor, onelye ſhe was charged by hir huſband, not to goe abroad a goſſipping with hir neighbours: inſomuch that either on working-dayes or on holy-dayes, when all the wiues in Romney went to bee merry, ſhee was faine as a poore priſoner to keepe home: which although ſhe paſſed ouer with ſylence and patience, ſo yet ſeeing his iealouſie was without cauſe, ſhe vowed with hir ſelfe if euer a freend and opportunitie ſerued to hir minde, to make him weare a horne an inch longer then all his neighbours: but he kept hir ſhort from that, for euery day when ſhee was at home, ſhe ſat by him in the ſhop, where he ſong like an Nightingale, hauing his eye neuer of his wiues face; or if ſhe ſat within, hir mother in law an olde iealous woman bore hir company; if ſhe went to fetch water, hir mother was at hir elbow; whatſoeuer ſhe did, or whether ſo euer ſhe went, to be breefe, hir huſband, or hir mother was at one end, which greeued the yong woman. So ſuſpitious and iealous was this Cobler, that all Romney talked of his folly: and to vexe him as they paſſed by, would ſay to him; ah neighbour good morrow, now that you haue gotten a faire wife, we hope to haue you one of the brotherhood, and that the Cuckow in Aprill may ſit and ſing in your houſe as well as with your poore neighbours. I feare not that quoth the Cobler, let hir do hir worſt, I will giue hir leaue, meaning that he kept ſuch narrow watch ouer hir, as he could neuer be deceiued, and therefore euery day his wife ſitting by him when he was yerking of his ſhoes, and ſhe at hir wheele, then he would chat out this ſong.

The Coblers ſong.

WHen as the Nobilitie pull downe their towers,
Their manſion houſes and ſtately bowers:
And with ſtone and timber make hoſpitals free,
Then the Cobler of Romney ſhall a Cuckold be.

When

When Gentlemen leaue of their Peacockly ſutes,
And that all their workes are charities fruites:
Tendring the poore which needy they ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When Vſurers run vp and downe with their gould,
And giue it to them from whome it was pould:
And Colliers ſackes ouer great you do ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When Weſtminſter hall is quite without benches,
And Southwarke Banckeſide hath no prettie wenches,
When in Smithfield on Fridaies no iades you can ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When Maides hate mariage,and loue to liue chaſt,
Virgins forſooth till foureſcore be paſt:
And loue not that yoongmen their beauties ſhould ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When wiues are not wilfull,but needs will obay,
When ſilent and ſpeechleſſe they ſit a whole day:
When Goſſips do meete,and no words there wilbe,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When womens toongs doo ceaſe for to wagge,
And ſhoomakers giue not their maiſters the bagge:
When Cuckolds and keepers want hornes for their fee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When tapſters and alewiues from Berwick to Douer,
Fill thirdingdeal pots till the drinke run ouer,
When the quart is ſo full that no froth you may ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When Smithes forſweare to drinke of ſtrong Ale,

And liue without liquor whiles their noſes be pale:
When in Vintners wine no mixture you ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

When Dutchmen hate butter, and the Spaniards pride,
When Cardnars do want a trull by their ſide:
When the Pope like Peter humble you ſee,
Then the Cobler,&c.

Euery day did the Cobler vſe to ſing this ſong, and there dwelled next vnto him a Smith that was a tall and a yong lusty fellow, proper of perſonage, of a comely viſage, curteous, gentle, and debonaire, ſuch a one as this Coblers wife could haue wiſhed to hir Paramour, if time and opportunity would haue fauoured hir fancie: and the Smith ſéeing what a ſmocker wench the Coblers wife was, and what a iealous ſole ſhée had to hir husband, ſorrowed at the good fortune of the Cobler, that hee had ſo faire a wife, and wiſhed that hee coulde finde meanes to haue ſuch a one to his friend: vpon this, being next neighbours, and their houſes ioining together, the Smith woulde oftentimes when his leiſure ſerued him come to the Coblers ſhop and talke with him; where betwéen the Smith & the Coblers wife paſſed ſuch glaunces, that he perceiued there was no want, but place and opportunity to fulfill their deſires. One day amongſt the reſt, Fortune ſo fauored this yong couple, that the Cobler went forth to buy Leather, and left his mother and his wife in the ſhop: the old woman not hauing ſlept the laſt night was heauy and fell a ſléepe, and the young woman ſate ſinging at hir worke. The Smith perceiuing this, laid by his hammers and went to the ſtal, where he ſaluted his neighbour, and ſhe returned him the like curteſie.

At laſt ſéeing the olde beldame was ſure, he began to

reueale

reueale vnto hir how long hee had loued hir, and how hee was sorry that shée was combred with such a one as for his iealousie, aboue all other men deserued to be made a Cuckolde: sundry spéeches past betwéene the Smith and the Coblers wife, till at last shée rose, and gaue him hir hãd, that shée loued him better then any man in ỹ world, and would if any occasion would serue, euer striue to content him. Then sweéte heart quoth he, doe mee but this fauour, faine to morrow some occasion to go to your Mothers, and come on the further side of the way fall by such a doore, and then let mee alone for opportunity to satisfie both our desires: To this shee agréed, and the Smith went to his Shoppe: presently the olde woman wakte, the Cobler came home, and all was well.

At night when they were in bed, taking him about the necke shée kist him, and tolde him that certaine of hir friendes met to morrowe at hir Mothers, and that shée would faine goe and sée them, I pray you good husband quoth shée, let your mother and I goe thither, I will not part out of hir sight, neither will we make any long tarriance: ỹ husband for shame could not deny this requeste, but granted it: whereupon the next morning shée got hir vp, and on with hir holyday apparrell, and made hir as fine as fine might bee: the Cobler séeing his wife so trickt vp in hir cleane Linnen, beganne to bee iealous, and calde his Mother aside, and charged hir by that loue shée bare him, not to let his wife part out of hir company till shée came home againe, which shée promised with an oath: so away they went, & the Cobler he set him downe and began to sing.

The Smith that all this day was not idle, had compounded with an olde woman by whose house shée must passe, to fauour them with house rome, and reuealed vnto hir all the matter: whose wife it was, and howe hee would haue his purpose brought

to passe: by my troth sonne quoth she, I haue hard much talke of that iealous Cobler, and I would do my indeuour to make the Asse were a horne: vpon this they resolued, & she likt well of his policie, & said loue had many shiftes, at last the Smith spied his mistresse all in her brauerie, comming with her mother in law: the old wife was readye, as shee past by the doore, threw a great bowle full of bloudy water right vpon hir head, that all her cloathes, and cleane lynnen was marred, being so berayde that shee could goe no further: alas mistresse quoth the old woman, I crie you mercie, what haue I done? full sore it was against my will: but for Gods sake come into the house, and shift you with cleane linnen: if you haue none at home, I will lend you of the best that I haue, goe in daughter, quoth hir olde mother in law, it is a chance, and against an ill turne sometime no man may be: ile goe home as fast as I can, and goe fetch you cleane linnen, the whiles drie your gowne, and make all things els ready. I pray you do good mother (quoth she) and next way goes hir mother in lawe: and assone as she was out of doores, the old woman led hir into an inwarde Parlour where the Smith was, and there these two louers by this policie made the iealous Cobler were the horne.

Whiles thus they were solacing themselues, the old wife she came stumbling home, and for haste had like to breake hir necke ouer the threshould, her fall made the Cobler start, and when he saw it was his mother, and that he mist his wife, he was halfe mad, and askt his mother hastily where she was: the old woman short winded was almost out of breath, and for a good space sat puffing and blowing to fetch winde; at last she cryed out: alas deare sonne, such a chaunce as neuer was hard of: as we went through old Romney, hard by the church, a woman threw out a bowle of bloudie water right vpon your wiues head, which hath so berayed hir linnen

and

and hir gowne, that she could go no further, and so I as fast as I could came running home for clean clothes: oh for the passion of God mother quoth he, hie to hir cheſt, and get hir cloathes ready, for it may be a fetch to make the poore Cobler a Cuckhold; a horne mother is soone grafted: with that the old woman got all in a readines, and away ran the Cobler & his mother together. Well the two louers out at a little hole kept good watch and warde, that anon they spied where the Cobler and his mother came trudging: in went his wife, and sat hir downe by the fier, where the Cobler found her onely sitting with the old woman in hir petticoate, dryng hir gowne, assone as she saw him she wept: and he although he greeued at the mischance, yet for that hee spied hir in no companie, he was satisfied, and wisht hir to be content, & sent for a pot of beere or two to make hir drinke: and after he had seene all well, and his wife in hir cleane apparell, setting them a little on the way; home he went againe to his shop, and his wife went to hir mothers, where an houre or two she past away the time in chat, and then returned home with hir mother in law. Thus the Cobler was not suspitious of his wiues being abroad, but tooke hir misfortune for a chaunce, and the Smith euery day according to his woonted custome, would come and chat with his neighbour the Cobler, and sometimes found opportunitie to talke with the wife, but neuer out of the shop: on a day the Cobler being from home, and the old woman within peecing of hir hose, the Smith came to the shop, and finding hir alone, began to lay a plot, how to make hir husband a Cuckold, while he held the dore: she promist if he would deuise it, she would put it in practise, and so agreed they concluded betweene themselues, and they brought it cunningly to passe, thus.

It chaunced within a fortnight after, that as the Cobler and his wife lay in bed, she fell on a great laughter,

hir

hir husband demaunding the cause, she made him this answer. I will tell you husband a strange thing, so it is, that this other day when you went to buie Lether, my mother and I sat in the shop, and she fel fast a sléepe, your neighbour the Smith, he, as his custome is, came to the windowe, and séeing my mother a sléepe, began to court me with faire wordes and large promises, and told me, that if I would find the meanes that when you were out, I would let him lie with me, he would giue me fortie shillings. I shakt him off as well as I could, but he would haue no nay at all, but threw foure Angels into my lap: whereupon I toke the golde, for me thought they were foure fayre péces, and promised him that to morrow you went foorth, and my mother to, and then he should finde me alone in the chamber. Upon this hee went away, and left me the gold, and therfore if it please you, to morrow I thinke good you should faine your selfe to go abroad, and my mother to, and then hide you in a chamber hard by, and assoone as he is come in, you may stand at the dore and heare all our talke: when you heare me consent, then breake in, and take the Cobler, and swinge him well, and I warrant you husband there will diuerse commodities rise of it: for not onely we shall haue this gold, and get more for amends, but euer after be rid of such a knaue.

This motion pleased the Cobler well, & the rather because the Smith profest to be his great frend, and yet would séeke to doo him such disgrace: vpon this conclusion they resolued, and so fel a sléepe. The next day in the afternoone, the Cobler fained himselfe to go out, and his mother with him, and after comming home at a backs dore went vp into the next chamber, & hid themselues, by and by according vnto promise came the Smith, and went roundly vp to the chamber, where hee found the Coblers wife: wherefore straight shutting the dore with a boult in the inside, he fell to set vp plumes on the

Coblers

Coblers head-peece, the Cobler he very eafilie got to the doore with a great pollax in his hand, and began to listen: with that he hard the smith offer faire to his wife: nay (quoth she) I haue kept promise with you, for I onely promised to let you vp into my Chamber: tush quoth he, this is but a cauill: and many words past betweene them: the Cobler and his mother standing at the doore, with her naye and his yea, till the Cobler had a new browantler growne out of his old hornes; and then shee answered him, seeing nothing would content him, hee should haue his pleasure: with that the Cobler was readie to rush in, but that his mother staid him, and bid him harke further: and dost thou meane good faith, quoth the Smith: I wherefore else (quoth the Coblers wife) came we into this place: why then (quoth the Smith) heare what I will say to thee: Dost thou thinke, though we be here in secret, that our faults will not be seene openly: that though thy husband knowes not of, and that it is kept close from the world, that there is not one aboue that sees all, & wil reuenge it: yes vilde strumpet as thou art, & for this cause came I to trie thee: thou hast an honest man to thy husband, who loues thee more deerly then himselfe, who works hard, to suffer thee ỹ thou shalt not want, and wilt thou in his absence wrong him: thinke if euer thou dost it, it will come out, & thou shalt be renenged with open shame: I am thy husbands dearest friend, with whom I am daily conuersant, and dost thou thinke I could find in my hart, to offer him such iniury: no: & then art not thou more to blame, that being ỹ wife of his bosome, wilt betray thy husband, who is deerer to thee then all friends: fie vpon thee vild woman, fare thee wel & amend: I wil not yet tell thy husband, vnlesse I spie thee prowe light, but I shall neuer thinke well of thee while I liue: & with ỹ he opened ỹ chamber doore, & the cobler chopt in, & taking ỹ smith by ỹ hand, said, neighbor, I thank you for your good counsel, I haue hard al the communication ỹ past

betwéene you and my wife, and truelie: and with that the Cobler wept, I am heartily glad I haue such a trustie friend, to whom in my absence at any time, because my mother is an old woman, I commit the ouersight of my wife: and truely neighbour quoth hee, I pray you thinke neuer the worse of hir, for she told me the whole matter, & appointed me to stand at the doore, that when you should haue offered hir any discurtesie, I might haue rusht in and haue taken you: so that I perceiue you are as honest as she, and she as honest as you, and that your meanings were both a like. I am glad of that quoth the Smith, that you haue so vertuous a wife, I hope I haue done the part of a frend, to pleasure my neighbour: you haue done so quoth the Cobler, and therefore ere we part, wéele drinke a quart of wine. So the Cobler bestowed good chéere on the Smith, and euer after accompted him for his friend, and whensoeuer he went out of towne, committed the charge of his wife to the Smith, who at all times had frée egresse and regresse to the Coblers house without suspition.

This tale of the Smith made al the company to laugh, and the cobler he was starke mad for anger, saying, that if it had béene his case, he would haue giuen him wine with a cudgell: tush Cobler quoth the Smith, neuer thinke but our art can surpasse yours in such wenching matters, and that a Smith can sooner make a Cobler a Cuckold, then a Cobler a Smith: vpon this they fell to iarres, & from words had faine to blowes, if they of the Barge had not parted them: so at last they were quiet, and made friends. And then the Cobler he began to intreate that they would go forward in their merry exercise, whereupon a gentleman sitting by said; maisters, it is so good to passe away the time, that to continue so honest a sport, I will be next: and thus therefore I will describe him.

The

¶ The deſcription of the Gentleman.

HIs ſtature was of a middle length,
VVell ioynted, of a good ſtrength,
Siken writtes report to vs
VVas that Troian Troilus:
For hee was of comely viſage,
And his manners of curteous vſage.
His haire in curled lockes hung downe,
And well I wot the coloure was nutbrowne:
And yet it was ful bright and ſheene,
Such wore Paris I weene:
VVhen he ſailed to Grecia
To fetch the faire Helena.
His front was of a ſyluer hue,
Powdred thicke with vaines blue.
His eies were lumynous,
Chriſtallyne and beauteous:
Gray and ſparkling like the ſtarres,
VVhen the day her light vp ſparres.
His cheekes like the Lilies white,
Or as Luna being bright:
And yet comely therevpon,
VVas ſhadowed colour Vermilion:
That gaſers all woulden ſuppoſe,
How the Lilie and the Roſe,
Did maken warre each with other,
VVhich ſhould be aboue an other.
His ſuercoate was of Satten blew,
Like vnto a louer true:
His hoſe were garded along,
VVith many a broad veluet thong.
His Cloake grew large and ſide,
And a faire whinyard by his ſide.

The pummell guilt: and on his head
He had a bonnet colour read:
An alder leefer ſwaine I weene,
In the barge there was not ſeene:
And then thus he gan tell,
What in Cambridge to a ſcholler befell.

¶ The Gentlemans tale.

Conteining the contrarie fortunes that a Scholler of Cambridge had in his Loues.

IN the Vniuerſitie of Cambridge, in Peters Hoſtell, there liued a Scholler famous for his learning, called Rowland, who beeing placſt there by his friends, ſo profited, that he grew to be one of ỳ felowes of the houſe, being in great eſtimation for the honeſty of his life, and the excellencie of his learning: he was a mã as well proportioned as he was qualified: and had as well bona corporis, as he had bona animi, and could as well play the wag and the wanton abroad, as he could applie his Bookes and ſtudie at home: amorous he was, and one that delighted to feede his eye with euery faire face, which after returned to his great preiudice, thus. It fortuned one day in the Summer ſeaſon, that for recreation he walked as farre as Cherryhinton, to eate a meſſe of Creame, where being very pleaſant, as hee ſat ieſting with his Hoſteſſe; there came in a Gentlemans daughter in the towne, a maide of exceeding beautie, ſo well proportioned in the lineaments of hir face, that nature ſeemed to try in hir an experiment of hir cunning. This girle, as wiſe as ſhe was faire, and as wanton as ſhee was wittie, came in and queſtioned with the hoſteſſe about ſome buſineſſe: Rowland ſeeing ſuch a Nymphe come ſweeping in, thought eyther Venus or Diana had

come

come in their Country wéedes to bewitch mens fancies: he cast his eie vpon the excellencie of hir phisnomy with such a piercing loke, that Loue entring by the eie, so wrong him at the heart, that forsoth fancie hir of force he must.

Nowe my young Scholler coulde doe nothing but gaze vppon hir, for Court hir hee coulde not, vnlesse hee should haue begun to woe hir with some wordes of Art, or some Axiomes of Philosophie. The young Gentlewoman séeing the Scholler loke so earnestly vppon hir, beganne to blush, and so taking hir leaue of the Hostesse went hir way. The Scholler séeing hir going out of doores, thought of the old prouerbe: Faint heart neuer woone faire Lady. And therefore called to hir thus: Faire Gentlewoman quoth he, you may see we Schollers haue litle maners, that holding the pot in our hands will not make such a swéete saint as you drinke: howe say you Gentlewoman, will it please you to pledge mee? The wily wench hearing such a Schollerlike gratulation, séeing by this salute, that Schollers had read of Loue, more then they coulde say of Loue: and though they coulde tell what was Latine for a faire woman, yet could neither woe hir, nor winne hir, turned backe againe, and with a lowe curtesie thanked him. Hee off with his corner Cappe (for hee was a Batcheler in Artes) and with a glauncing loke drunke to hir: Shée like a wanton, pledged him with a smile. Rowland at this taking heart at grasse, stept to hir, and toke hir by the hande: beginning thus to holde hir in chat.

Your Towne here (forsoth) of Cherryhinton, hath made me oft play the trewãt to come hither for cherries: and as mine Hostes can tel, full many a messe of creame haue I eaten in hir house: for we schollers are good cõpanions, & loue to be pleasant: especially if we might haue the company of such faire Gentlewomen as your selfe:

Therefore Mistres, if I chaunce to come to towne to eat a pound of cherries (if I may be so bold) I would trouble you to take part with mee; and if I meete you at Cambridge, the best wine in the Towne shall bee your welcome: the wench (that had much adoe to keepe hir countenance) thought to feede him vp with faire speeches, till shee made him as fatte as a foole, and therefore made him this reply. Truely syr indeede many schollers come to Cherryhinton to eate cherries: but syr, you ars the first man that euer I dranke withall, for schollers bee so full of their learning, and fine tearmes, that Country wenches cannot vnderstande them, but I for my part at the first sight like of you so well, that if my leisure serue, whensoeuer you come and please to send for mee, I will as long as I dare beare you company, but nowe forsoth time cals mee away and I must bee gone. With all my heart quoth Rowland, but truely wee must not part without a kisse, which shee willingly toke at his hands, and went home: where assone as shee came, shee reuealed all to a young gentleman that lay in hir Fathers house, who was sure to hir: they laughing heartily at the schollers Courting, and resoluing to make good sport with him ere they had done. But Rowland he that thought euery smile was a fancie, and euery maide that laught on him, loued him, coniectured assuredly by the familiar curtesie of the gentlewoman, that shee was greatly affectionate towards him: whereupon he began to inquire of his Hostesse whose daughter shee was, of what wealth hir Father was, what children he had, and what Dowrie the maide was like to haue to hir portion, as a man resolued the woman was already woone, because shee had giuen him such gracious fauours. The Hostesse as well as shee could tolde him all: which done, he paide his shot, and went to Cambridge, where he began altogether to muse on the beauty of his Mistres, and to lay an hundreth plots in his head what were best to be done: at last

he

he resolued to send a letter to hir, to signifie his loue: or else to go himselfe, & to carry two or three of his fellows with him, and so to discourse vnto hir howe he loued hir; but at last hee fully determined with himselfe to write vnto hir: wherefore taking pen and inke in hande, hee wrote a letter to hir to this effect.

Rowlands Letter to the faire Maide of Cherryhinton.

MIstres Marian, Aristotle the great Philosopher, for all his wit was in loue with Hermia: and Socrates the sage, could not so farre subdue his passions, but that he fell in feakes with Zantippa: Schollers as they reade much of loue, so when they once fall in loue, there is no ho with them till they haue their Loue. The finest glasse is most brittle, and the best Schollers soonest ouergon with fancy. For an instance, was not Ouid as deepe in loue, as he was excellent in learning? I bring in these comparisons Mistres Marian, because the other Sonday being at Cherryhinton, and seeing your sweete selfe, I was so ouertaken with your beauty and good behauior, that euer since the remembrance of your face could neuer out of my fancie: nor, I thinke, neuer shall, although I should be drenched in the forgetfull flouds of Lethe. Seeing then my affection is so great, I pray you consider of me, and be not so vnkinde, but let me haue loue for loue: and though here in the vniuersitie you see me simple, yet my Parents at home are men of good parentage, & what I want in wealth, I shall supply in Learning: ponder with your selfe, and reade but the liues and answeres of the Philosophers, and see howe they vsed their wiues, with what curtesie, howeuer the women were the most Maisters, and had the Soueraignty, which they desire. Thus hoping you will consider of my Loue; desiring you to send me an answer, I bid you farewell.

Yours in dust and ashes, Rowland.

When hee had thus finished his letter, hee thought to shew himselfe somewhat poeticall, and thought a letter was not worth a rush, unlesse there were some verses at the latter end, and there he affixed as a postscript this amarous ditty.

Rowlands song to his Mistres.

APproach in place Pierides,
My vaine in verses to bend:
Dame Chryseis which gauest Homer sucke,
Thy tender teats me lend.

Alcmena thou which Ioue didst rocke,
In cradle full of ioy:
Eke swath me in those swadling clowtes,
Account me for thy boy.

Ye Naiades and pretty Nymphs,
That on Parnassus dwell:
Lend me your Muse that I may now,
My Mistres beauty tell.

How that in beautie shee doth passe
Venus the Queene of Loue:
To whom, if I doe gaine hir grace,
I will be Turtle Doue.

Therefore my deere conceiue my griefe,
And thinke how I doe loue thee:
And in some lines send me reliefe,
For time and truth shall proue me.

Thus hoping pen and paper shall
Thy minde to me short tell:
But loue me as I doe loue thee,
And so my deere farewell.

Thus

THus hauing both finished his letter and his verses, he sent them by a conuenient messenger the next Saterday to Cherryhinton, and that forsoth was his Hostesse: who very orderly sent for the gentlewoman to hir house, and deliuered the letters to hir, with earnest commendations from syr Rowland. The gentlewoman in outward shewe seemed to accept them as gratefully, as he sent them louingly, and so hied hir home: where presently shée called for hir newe betrothed husband, and other gentlemen hir friends, and reuealed vnto them how shée had receiued letters from hir newe louer the Scholler. All they flocked about hir, to heare what excellent stuffe was conteined in so learned a mans letters: but when they heard him howe like a Philosophicall fole he writ: they all in a synode peremptorily concluded, that the greatest Clarkes were not the wisest men: and I maruaile of that quoth one of the company, for two reasons: for the one I haue heard this old said saw, that Loue makes men Oratours and affection whetteth on eloquence: Secondly, there was none more amorous then Ouid (yet a profound scholler) insomuch that he writ three bookes De Arte Amandi, and so did Anacreon Tibullus, & Propertius. I but quoth an other, as they were schollers, so were they well brought vp in the Court, and knew as many externall manners, as they did inwarde principles: but ware my Maisters, when a scholler is once brought vp in the Vniuersities, and hath no other bringing vp but plaine Ergo to plod in, nor conuerseth with none but his bookes, and then hap to fall in Loue: trust me he will bee as ignorant to woe, as the ploughman to dispute, thinking that womens fancies are won with Figures, and their thoughts ouerreacht with the quiddities of Art: but of all that euer I heard write, this setteth downe his minde the most simply: and therefore quoth Marian shall hee be answerd as foolishly, for I my selfe will be Secretary. Nay quoth diuers of the gentle-

men, wee will put in our verdict with you: No quoth shée, trie but a womans witte: thats knauish enough quoth one of them: and so stepping to hir standish shée wrote thus.

Marian of Cherryhinton to Syr Rowland of Cambridge, health.

SWéete syr Rowland, I receiued your Letters, wherein I perceiue that Schollers in loue are like to a Sow with pig vnder an Apple trée, which either hastily must haue a crab, or else lose their Litter. If I bring in a Country comparison blame mee not, in that I am a Country wench, and haue none but plaine Country lodgicke, but howsoeuer I write, I meane well. Indéede rightly you say, that the finest glasse is most brittle, and the best Scholler soonest pinched with Loue, which I thinke to bee true: for assone as euer I sawe you, howe your eies waited vpon my face, as an obiect of your delight, I toke you to be too wise, kinde, and amorous: and therefore séeing euer since you haue béene passionate, it were great pitty that you shoulde not haue for your paines (euen as wee vse in a homely prouerbe) a Country sackefull of loue: and the rather you induce mee to thinke well of you, that you bring in the examples of Aristotle and Hermia, and of Socrates and Zantippa: whereby you séeme to promise, that I shall as they had, inioy the soueraignity; and that if I be like them in conditions, you will be as suffering as they in patience: yet will I neither be so proude towards you as Hermia, for shée ridde Aristotle with a snaffle like a horse: nor so waspish as Zantippa, for she crownd Socrates with a Chamberpot, but betwéene both: and so wishing you to hope the best, I bid you farewell.

Yours neuer if not euer, Marian of Cherryhinton.

After

After shée had done hir letter, that shée might séeme to be no whit behinde him in any good will: shée leaned hir head on hir hand, and in a Poeticall furie writ hir Louer these verses.

Marians verses to Syr Rowland.

FEare not my deare the stormes of Loue,
for they are passing sower:
And sometimes sweete as honycombe,
and all within an hower.

Like to a Sunshine Sommers daie,
When Phœbus shewes amaine:
And yet ere night from tawnie Clowdes,
doe fall a showre of raine.

So whatsoeuer chance betide,
or whatsoeuer fall:
If Father frowne, or Mother chide,
yet must you beare withall.

For why? the Cuckow doth not come
in Aprill more sure,
Then I will fixe my loue on thee,
for euer to indure.

Thus wishing thee to thinke of me,
in studie or in streete,
I bid you heartilie farewell,
till we in Cambridge meete.

HAuing thus ended hir song and the Letter, shée calde the Conuocation of the merry gentlemen, & shewed them hir humour in prose, and hir vaine in verse: asking if shée had done it knauishly enough? I quoth hir betrothed husband, and so excéedingly well, that you shall stand for foure and twenty knaues till Christmas next. Tush quoth an other, womens wittes are like Sheffielde kniues, for they are sometimes so kéene as they will cutte a haire, and sometimes so blunt that they must goe to the grindstone: That is (quoth the second) when you perswade them to silence or obedience, talke with them but in that doctrine, and they are méere dunces.

Thus they began to descant of womens wit, but the gentlewomã wily enough, left them all, & went & laid vp hir letters till Saterday market: Then shée went to his Hostes, & deliuered thẽ to hir, earnestly intreating hir, if shée saw syr Rowland, to conuey that packet vnto him. The Hostesse promised hir to doe it faithfully, and effectually: and away to Cambridge shée went, where scarse shée was set with hir butter and hir milke, but shée spied syr Rowland come flinging downe the Market hill, in his wide sléeude Gowne, and his corner Cap: shée néede not to call him, for hee straight found hir out, and shée as soone deliuered him the packet: syr Rowland thankt hir, and away hee went to his studie to reade the contents: but it was too farre to Peters Hostell, and therefore hee calde in at a Tauerne by the way for a pint of wine, and there he opened the letter, which when hee had read, hee perceiued by the contents shée loued him: for hee being simple, perceiued not howe shée bobde foole with him: but taking euery iest for a sentence, hee thought himselfe the Maister of all worldly content, and that Fortune coulde not aduaunce him higher on hir whéele, then to haue so faire a Maide to his Paramour. Then he viewed ouer hir verses, & in a great passi-

on

an praised hir Poetry, commended hir wit, saying: for stature she was Iuno, for beautie Venus, for learning and qualities Pallas: thus in meditation of his letter and his loue, sat pore sir Rowland, from eight a clocke till eleauen, and then hearing the Hostell Bell ring to dinner, for feare he should loase his halfepenny chops, he put his letter into his pocket, and went his way. After dinner, he fell to his old vaine: got alone to be solitarie, & then sat ruminating on the good successe of his loues, accompting it rather to his profession, then his fortune, for he thought none so faire, chaste, nor riche, but a Scholler might win with his Logick. Thus he passed ouer day by day in sending of letters to his loue, and diuers times resorting thither, but seldome could he speake with hir, for that she framed some excuse; onely when she ment to laugh, then she was for his company. But it fell out that one Saterday aboue the rest, that sir Rowland met hir in Cambridge, and finding hir with other hir neighbours, saluted hir, and would nedes welcome hir to the towne with a pinte of Wine, which she toke very kindly, that she might soth him vp still in his vaine hope, and forsoth to the Tauerne shée and her companions went with him, where they had good game at our Cambridge woer: but Marian taking him aside, told him that hir father and hir mother had intelligence of their loues, and as farre as she could coniecture, it was by his hostesse: therefore she wild him not to make her priuie to his secrets any more, nor to come to Cherryhinton but when she sent for him, which should be as oftē as opportunity would serue, hoping though hir father now were not forward, yet in time he would consent, & especially, if he saw him Maister of Arts: with this the Scholler rested satisfied, and they dranke their wine and departed. Thus betwéene them passed on all the Summer, till the déepe of winter, about Christmas, when shée on a time & the rest of the Gentlemen, desirous to be pleasant, determined to

haue some sport with the Scholler, and so caused Marian to send a Letter for him, that he should come that night and speake with her: which she did; and he poore soule no sooner receiued it, but in all hast hied him in the frostie euening to Cherryhinton: where when he came, hee straight spoke with Marian, & she wisht him to stay in an old Barne while her Father was at supper, and then she would conuey him into a base court, where he should walke hard vnder her chamber doore, and then when her father were to bed, she would let him in. The Scholler stood there a while, and Marian came straight & conducted him into a square court, where Rowland rested him till hir father should go to bed. The night grew darke, and with that falling colde, so that Rowland waxed weary of his standing, and wisht that her father were in bed: there stood the poore Scholler shaking and trembling in his ioynts, till it was eleuen of the clocke: then saw he a light at the doore, and he heard Marian cal him: oh blessed houre thought he, that now I shall both go to a gwdfier, and to my Louer. Sir Rowland (quoth she) be still a while, my father and mother is gone to bed, but my brother and two Gentlemen more are vp at Cardes, & they haue but a set to play, and then they will to their rest: alas sweete heart (quoth he) I am almost sterued for cold, yet the hope that I haue to enioy thy presence, doth comfort me, that I take all things with patience. The Gentlemen that stood hard by and hard all this, laught at the scholler, and vp they went againe to their chamber to be merry: but still walkt poore Rowland, beating his hãds about him for cold, and expecting still when his Louer should cal him: wel there he trauerst his ground stil like a pery-patetian, and only had the sight of the heauens to contemplate, till it was about one of the clock, and then came they all downe againe to laugh: & assone as he saw the candle at the chinke of the doore, he began to be comforted, & came thither, shaking & beating of his teeth so

sore,

sore, that he could not speake. Where are you sweet hart (quoth she) alas how sorry am I for thy distresse, thinke that the heart in my belly is as colde for greefe as thy ioints are with the frost, faine would I haue thee come in, but the loosers will not part play, and so they sit still, therefore I hope thou wilt weigh my credit. Oh Marian (quoth he) & his teeth so iarred one against another, that they could scarse vnderstand him, I am like to perish with cold, yet were it twise as frostie, & the night thrise as long, I would walke heere, rather then procure thy disparagement: gramercie sweet loue (quoth she) & with that she bid him be still a while, & the Gentlemen all fell a laughing to heare how kinde a fole the Scholler was, and with what patience, he bid his pennance: oh, quoth the one of them, this is but an experiment of his Philosophicall principles, for he reades in Tully:

Non oportet sapientem in aduersis dolore concidere.

I (quoth the second) and Mimus Publius giues him this counsell:

Aduersis te proba, vt fortunam, cum necesse fuerit, patienter insultantem feras.

You say well (quoth the third,) but let him for mee make an instance of himselfe for such axiomes, I wil rather be a warme foole, then so colde a Philosopher. This they gan descant vppon the poore Schollers mysterie, till the clock stroake three, and then as they were comming downe, they heard a noise at the doore, which was this poore Rowland creeping vnder ỹ shade for warmth, his teeth beating so lowd, that they might heare them easely vp the staires, all this mooued not my yoong Mistresse to pittie, but increast their laughter. Assoone as hee heard them come downe the staires, almost dead,

he

he cald out, who is there: oh sweet heart, it is thy Marrian, quoth shée? Then for Gods sake quoth Rowland, take pittie of my life, for I am almost dead. doo but open the doore, and let me sit héere vpon the staires, that I may haue some shelter from the cold. Alas quoth she swéete loue, thou shalt and thou wilt: but when the doze is opened, it makes such a noyse, that it wakens the whole house. Rather, quoth he, let me suffer death, then you be discredited, for if I were to abide the stone of Sisiphus, the whéele of Ixion, the gripe of Prometheus, & the hunger of Tantalus, yet had I rather pocket vp all these tortures with patience, then bring thy credit within the compasse of the least preiudice: at this period she left him, and vp they went, smiling at the constancie of Rowland. The Gentlemen they were sléepie, and went to bed, and Marian, as far as I can coniecture, though it were somwhat before the mariage, that night made triall of hir new betrothed husband, where from thence, she lay with him till sir, and then it wared day light, and she rose; and remembring her louer went downe, opened the doore, and found him almost senceleste: there wiping hir eyes, as though shee had wept, shee perswaded him that shee was the most sorrowfull woman in the world for his sharpe frostie night he had suffered, protesting she was falne into an ague, for very feare & gréefe she had taken to sée him in such distresse, & could by no meanes redresse it: but good Rowland (quoth shee) be content, hie thée to Cambridge, and take some hot broaths, least by this meanes thou fall into a sickneste, & then for very sorrow I dye: no quoth Rowland, & he could scarse speake or go, feare not me, for the hope of thy after fauours, will be a sufficient comfort for me: and with that taking his leaue for his cold nights worke he had a kisse, and so departed. Wel as weak as he was, home he scambled, & got to his chamber, & discouered to a friend of his, how he was like to perish of an extreame cold he had take, if he did not so

much

much for him as to get him a Phisitiō: who straight wēt and brought him a Doctor, that with inward potions and outward oyles and vnguents so wrought him, that hee recouered him to his former health, although veris hardly: for he was so frosen in his loines, and so nipped in the muskells and synewes, that if his Physition had not bene good, he had perished. It was almost a quarter of a yeare before Rowland was frolick againe: in which time Marian thinking she had lost hir louer with a nut, sent him a present of apples to winne him againe, which he receiued so gratefullie that he valewed the worst of them worth a felowship, eating them with such an extraordinarie tast, that hee imagined them as sweet as Ambrosia, and all for that they came from his Marian. Thus continued Rowland in his amorous humour vntill such time as Marian forsooth must be maried: and for that it was aduent, there was no asking in the church, but they procured a license the day before. As shee and the rest of hir friends which were inuited to the nuptials were merilie iesting, oh Lord (quoth shee) I had almost forgot my selfe, to morrow must be the wedding, and the bride is at Cambridge: why gentlemen it were no bargaine if Rowland were not here: there fore quoth she, I will send for him, and lay such a plott e that hee shall be with vs all dinner, & yet tast none of our meat. I pray you quoth her husband, let vs se your cūning in that. Alas quoth one of the gentlemen, poore Rowland is credulous, and whatsoeuer mistres Marian saith, hee thinks it is Gospel: but if he wil be so simple as to think that his last nights worke is not a sufficient warning, hee is worthie of what so euer befalles. Well, vpon this Marian sent for him, and come hee did in the euening, where, to make my tale short, she made him walk in his wonted statie till one of the clocke: then she let him into a good fire, where he well warmed him selfe, and she louingly sate by him, discoursing of the last nightes worke

that he abode so patientlie: at last she commaunded the maide to lay the cloth that they might haue some quelque chose for a readie supper, which they went busilie about: for Rowland said he was verie hungrie. As the cloth was laid, and they readie to sit downe the wench came running in, and said that hir Maister was rising, and seeing the light of the fier was comming into the Parlor. Alas what shal I do quoth Mariã? hide me some where quoth Rowland whiles he be gone to bed. Come quoth she, here stands a new truncke and a large, come, skippe into it, and I will for a while rake vp the fire and goe to bed while the old man be fallen a sleepe: with that Rowland whipt into the truncke, and she lockt him in, & straight in a pleasant humor went to hir new husband, where shee lay al night, and left Rowland safe shut vp for starting. Still laie hee expecting when she should come, but hearing nothing, extremely wearie for verie griefe hee fell a sleepe till the next morning.

When the poore scholler awakt and entred into consideration where he was, he began to be halfe in suspition that he was mockt and abused, still he lay patiently till hee heard them of the house say, God morrow mistres Marian, God send you a good day, to day the Sun shines faire, you shal haue a cleere daie to your wedding. This word went as cold to his hart as a knife, that Marian should be maried, he made a sole to suffer such disparagment of his credit: yet as before he was patient in extreames, and so resolued with content to see the successe of his abuse. Well to Church goe the bridegrome and the bride with all their friendes attendants, and maried they were with great solemnitie: this done, home they came to dinner, and after they were set and placed in the parlor where this truncke stode, they fell to their viads which were verie sumptuous. The gentlemen bidding reach downe the pigge, the capon, goose, swan, turkey, phesant, biter, venison, and such daintie cates:

all

all this hard Rowland, and being passing hungrie, wished he had a legge of the worst of them in his hand; still hée stode almost famished and smothered till the tables were taken vp, and the boards shifted, and they fell to dauncing. All this heard Rowland, and hearing the musicke fell a sléepe vntill supper time, and then hee awakt, and heard how they laid the tables and went to supper where they were passing pleasant, and the more for that they ment to make sport with Rowland after supper was done, which continued not long, for they made the more hast for that they ment to be merrie. When the cloth was taken vp the Bride fetcht a great sigh: what wife quoth ỳ Bridegrome, why sigh you? in a dumpe? repent you of the match? no quoth shée, but I haue a blot in my conscience, and now before you all I meane to reueale it. I was once beloued of a Cambridge scholler, who loued me intierlie and suffred much for my sake: then from point to point shee recompted vnto them the whole discourse of the loues and fortunes passed betweene Rowland and hir, whereat the companie had good sport.

A man hee was quoth shée, wise, proper, and well proportioned: and for proofe hould the key, open the truncke quoth shée, and I will shew you his picture. Rowland hearing this, armd himselfe to suffer al: and so the truncke was opened: he rose out like Lazarus from his graue. Good Lord quoth the companie, what is this a spirit? In nomine Iesus vnde venis? E purgatorio quoth Rowland. And with that all the companie laught while they could sit. At last when they were wearie with laughing Rowland had silence, hee boldlie said: thus I am glad gentlemen that my mishap hath made you so merrie, and that mistres bride hath so large a plaine song to runne descant on; Caueat Emptor: this is but a comedie, but looke for a tragedie when soeuer it falles. And so he went out of the doore sore ashamed that hee

had such a kindlie scoffe. The companie laught well, and hee patientlie went home thinking how fortunate a man hee should be, if he might liue to reuenge. Rowland at this misfortune had an insight into the world and began to ware wiser, that in short time he became to haue as much knowledge in worldlie affaires as in his booke, and was for his good behauiour and pleasant witte highlie had in estimation, not onelie amongest schollers, but amongest townesmen, that in all the vniuersitie he was called the gentlemanlike scholler. Liuing thus in good credit, and yet discontented, because Fortune fauoured him with no opportunitie to reuenge: it so fell out at length that Marian comming euerie weeke to Cambridge, espied among the schollers one whom she cast hir eie on, and thought him the properest man in the whole Vniuersitie: Well, shee counted it but a glaunce, and thought as lightly to passe it ouer as it sleightly entred: for shee found loue, that though he entred in by graunt of courtesie, yet hee would not bee thrust out by force of extremitie, in so much that shee could not content hirselfe without, but with the sight of hir new friend, which was done so manifestlie that the scholler perceiued it, and aiming at the fairest, one Saterday seeing hir in the market offred hir a quart of wine, which she toke verie gratefully, and began to bee verie familiar with him, in so much that before they past, force of loue made her so shameleste, that she was content to yeeld to his request, so that time and place would serue without the disparagment of hir credite.

Vpon this they concluded, that maister Awdrey (for so wee wil call him) should grow familiar with hir husband, and by that meanes should hee haue a better meanes to the quieting of his minde. Vpon this determination they departed, and hee so brought it to passe, that not onlie he was acquainted with hir husband but verie familiar, that he would carrie maister Awdrey

often

often from Cambridge with him to Cherryhinton, and I hope you do imagin hee was no little welcome guest to his wife. Being thus fitted in their passions onely watching for place, lingring off the time at last it was concluded, that she should come on a Saterday to Cambridge, and faine to stay with a kinswoman of hirs that dwelt in the towne, and so lie with hir all night: this stood for a sentence, and so the nert weeke was decreed. In the mean time it so fel out, that maister Awdrey and sir Rowland being of great acquaintance, and such priuate familiars that nothing was holden to secret betweene them, maister Awdrey smothering this ioy in himselfe, thought to partake it with his friend: and so as he and sir Rowland were walking reuealed vnto him the loue that had past betweene him and Marian, and on saterday was ỹ night when his posse should come into esse, desiring him to tel him wher he might haue a house fit for such a purpose. Sir Rowlād hearing this smylde, which made M. Awdrey to inquire ỹ cause of his laughter: wherupon sitting down vpon ỹ grasse he begā to recount vnto him the whole discourse of his loues with Marian, & what sundry abuses he suffered at hir hand, to ỹ great & vtter infamy of schollers. M. Audrey hearing this, sat a great while in a muse, at last he saiḋ, and wil women be Crocodiles: to weepe rose water & vineger at one time, still to dally in extremes, to loue without reason & hate without cause? oh the folly of mē to be such to such painted sepulchers, whose painted sheaths hold leaden blades, whose skins are glorious like pāthers, but haue deuouring pāches. By that God that drew that infortunate femal frō that forefortunat Adā, I hate hir as extremely as I loued her earnestly: and I wil not onely yeeld ỹ opportunity to renēge, but I wil ioyne issue with thee to performe it to ỹ vttermost. At this Rowlād was tickled with inward ioy, & taking Awdrey in his arms protested such hūble seruice for that friendlie promise,

as euer should lye in his abilitie to execute. Thus in this determination of reuenge they crost the fieldes to Trumpington, and there they eate a messe of Creame, whither by chaunce came one of the Proctors, with whom both Rowland and Audrey were verie familiar: him they had in and made him as good chéere as such a simple alehouse could afford, and there in priuate reuealed to him all their practise, desiring his furtherance in the matter. The Proctor promised to do what in him lay for the execution of this merrie action: and there amongst them they laying and confirming the plot, they went all together home to Cambridge, where they past away the time pleasantly til Saterday came: and then according to promise was Marian there and met with Awdrey, who interteined hir with all the courtesie that he could, spending the day at the Tauerne whiles night came, and then he caried hir to the house appointed such a subaudi Domus as was fit for such a purpose: and there they supt. In the meane time Rowland had sent a letter to hir husband in Audreies name, that his wife being not wel was faine to stay at hir kinswoman all night, and desired him to come to hir the next morning, and that her father and the rest of the gentlemē would come with him, for that they should sée Rowland taken in bed with a prettie wench. This letter in all hast was conueied to Cherryhinton to hir husband, who reading the contentes waxed somewhat iealous, because he had séene verie familiar courtesies betweene Awdrey and his wife, and thought schollers were slie fellows, and could deuise many such Sophistications to make a man a cuckold: but hee conceald his suspicion to himselfe, and shewed the letter to his Father in law and the rest of the Gentlemen, who as they sorrowed his wife was not well, so they were all glad to sée such a comicall fortune of Rowland: hir husband taking euerie word for his aduantage, said he would be there by

foure

foure of the clocke to see Rowland taken vp. Thus they all agreed, and were gone by two of the clocke, where we leaue them comming to Cambridge: and againe to Marian, who after supper sat vp late, but Awdrey fild hir full of Wine till shee was almost droncke, that shee was verie heaute, and desired to goe to bed, which she did, and was no soner laid but she fell a sleepe, and Awdrey slipping out, put out the candle and sent in Rowland, and bad him now goe to his mistres: hee went into the chamber and lockt the doore, and maister Audrey stole out of the howse and went to his chamber, leauing Rowland with his paramour, where I thinke more for enuie of the man then for loue of the woman perhaps hee dubde him one of Paris priesthood, howsoeuer it was she descried not how it was, but both fell a sleepe: on the morrow by foure of the clock was Marians husband, hir father and the rest of the gentlemen at Peters hostell, where finding the gate open they went to maister Awdreys chamber and raised him vp, who quickly slipping on his cloathes, welcomed them, and went with them to finde out the Proctor, who watching for their comming was already with a dosen maisters of Art wel appointed walking in the court yard, & presentlie went his way with them & came to the house where Rowlād lay: the Proctor knockt and bade open the doore: who is that quoth the good wife? the Proctor quoth he; open ẏ doore & that quicklie, or I wil beat it down: the good man came stumbling downe in his shirt, and the goodwife was so amased that shee could not remember to tel hir guestes. The Proctor came in, and by the direction of Awdrey went straight to the Chamber: who be here quoth the Proctor? none sir quoth he, but a stranger and his wife: beat it open with a halbert quoth the Proctor: and with that for hast Marians husband ran against it, & the doore fell downe and hee into the chamber: with that Rowland couered hir close, and stepping out of the bed in his shirt

asked

asked what they ment. Ah syr Rowland quoth the Proctor, I am sorie wee haue diseased you this morne, I thought ful litle to haue found you here, what is ỳ cause you lie out of ỳ hostel to night? Truly sir quoth he, I was late abroad this night making merrie with my friends, & so I was faine to take vp my lodging here. How do you syr Rowland quoth Marians husbād & hir father, I maruel we see you not at Cherryhinton. Oh maisters quoth he, whē there is another comedie to play loke for me: but if you remēber I promised you a tragedy first, when ỳ is studied, I warrant I wil visit you. Now Mariā lying in bed & hearing al this, how she was betrayed and had laid with Rowland all night, & how hir father & hir husband were there present, thought surely now Rouland to the vttermost would be reuenged vpon hir, so ỳ she fel into a great sweat for feare. The Proctor that had his lesson taught him said, wel sir Rowland, had it bene any other but you that had bin taken abroad and in such a suspected house, he should haue gone to the Toule booth: but since you haue no other company fare wel. Awdrey iogd vpon Mariās husband, & as they were ready to go out of dore, tush M. Proctor quoth he, but I maruel you examin not who it is that lies with him, it may bee a pretie wench. What? is there one lies with him? I marie is there sir quoth he, and with that stepping to the bed he threw off all the clothes, and there lay his wife in hir smocke.

Sante amen quoth Rowland who is here?
Haue you seene such a chance this yeare?
What a woodcocke to come so soone
Fro Cherrihinton to Cābridge before noon,
And found a Cuckows nest.
Is this maisters in earnest or iest?
That Rowland so earlie in a morne
Should make a knaue weare a horne.
What man be not agast?
For you cannot call backe that is past.

At

At this all the Schollers fell a laughing, and ſyr Rowland ſate him downe in his ſhirt, and (to make the matter vp, that it might be aright blacke Santus) while they laught, cried Cuckowe. The Gentleman ſéeing his wife, and the father the daughter, they were in ſuch a maſe, that they ſtode as men ſenſeleſſe: they fell out a wéeping, the Schollers a laughing, the gentlemen a ſighing, and ſtill Rowland kept his wench, and cried Cuckowe: at laſt Rowland began thus. Why you my Maiſters and friends of Cherryhinton, did I not promiſe you a Tragedie, and haue I not nowe brought it to paſſe? I hope this Dame, and you all remember my frolſy night, and how I was brought out of the trunck: now am I not reuenged well? haue I not had my penyworts? Yes Villeine (quoth the gentleman) and firſt the whore ſhall die: and with that drawing out his Rapier, hee woulde haue kild hir: but the Proctor ſtaide him, and ſhée proteſted ſhée knew not how ſhée came there, but thought ſhée had béene at home in hir bedde. Vpon this all the Schollers perſuaded the gentleman that Rowland did it by Negromancie, and that if ſhée were the honeſteſt woman in the world, Magicke were able to doe as much: Rowland for very pitty affirmde it: and ſo they perſwaded him not to wade further in the matter for his owne credit, but to clappe it vp with ſilence. Shée wept and wrong hir hands, and hir father ſate and ſhed teares: but at laſt by the perſuaſion of the Proctor and the other Schollers, Rowland and hee for all this were made friendes: his wife and he agréed, as a man perſwaded ſhée was ſackeleſſe, and that it was done by Negromancy: and ſo all merrily went to the Tauerne and dronke, they going to the Colledge, and he to Cherryhinton, with full reſolation neuer more to let his wife come to Cambridge, for feare of the Schollers Art Magicke.

This tale made them all heartily laugh, euery one

commending the policie of the Scholler, that had inuented so good a reuenge. The Cobler he marked all very diligently, and swore there was not a more sound history for his turne not in all the Legenda Aurea: well it made all the Barge merry, and seeing they were al in a dump, they cried who is next: marry that am I quoth the scholler, and he began to settle himselfe, whome I can best describe thus.

The description of the Scholler.

A Man he was of a sober looke,
Giuen much vnto his booke:
For his visage was all pale,
And Clarkes tellen this tale,
That mickle studie makes men leane,
As well as doth a curst queane.
Apollo radiant and sheene,
His patterne long had beene;
For well skild was he,
In verses and Poetrie.
In Palmestrie he had some lore,
In other Arts mickle more.
Mickle could he say at each steuen,
Of the liberall Arts seuen:
Of the welking and the Axletree,
Whereon the heauens turnde me:
Of Mercurie and Charles waine,
And of the Beares twaine:
Calisto and hir sonne conueied thither;
Which to Seamen shew the weather:
When Neptunus with his mace,
Will make smile Amphitrites face.
Many other matters of Sophistrie,

Could

Could this Clarke in secrecie.
He could also speake of loue,
Of Paphos and of Venus doue.
And perhaps though he were a Clarke,
Yet he could skill in the darke
As well as a man of lay degree,
To dallie with a wench in priuitie.
His attire was all blacke,
But why doe I longer clacke?
This Clarke gan report,
His storie in this sort.

The Schollers tale.

Conteining the sundrie misfortunes that two Sicilian Louers had, and how at the ende their passionate sorrowes came to a pleasing successe.

WHen the king of Tunise was beaten out of his kingdome, & sought to enter againe by force, Iacomin Pierro, and Alexander Bartolo, two Noblemen of Sicilia, and both of Palermo, for the good will they bare to the king, made certaine tall barkes, and with their aide maugre his enemies, placed the king againe safe in his kingdome: which done they returned againe to Palermo. This Iacomin Pierro had a sonne called also Iacomin, and this Alexander had a daughter called Katherine, these two being neighbours children fell in loue together, insomuch that Iacomin noting the beautie of Katherine, seeing with his eie hir outward excellencie, and hearing with his eares hir inward vertues and perfection, entred with such deepe insight into hir qualities, that hee resolued in himselfe shee and none but shee should be the goddesse of his affections: & of the other side, Katherine feeding hir eie with the desired obiect of

his person, and with delight pleasing hir eare with the generall fame that ran through all Sicilia of his curtesie, affability, and valor: determined that none but Iacomin should enioy the floure of hir beauty. These two louers being in such a sympathie of agréeing passions, liued a long while with lookes, bashfull both to discouer the essence of their loues: yet at last Iacomin taking hart at grasse, finding one day fit place and opportunity, discoursed vnto hir, how euer since his yeares coulde entertaine any amorous thought, the Idea of hir beautie and vertues remained imprinted in his heart so déepely, that none but shée could satisfie the end of his incessant desire: which was no other, then the honest and honorable content of marriage. Katherine who was as willing as hee was desirous, told him that vpon that condition, whensoeuer their Parents should agrée, shée was ready to bee at his commaund. Thus they woed and ended, and all in a short space, for that time parting with a kisse. This swéete consent of thoughtes, continued a long time betwéene these two Louers, insomuch that Iacomin resolued shortly to breake the matter to his father, to whome he knew the match would bee most pleasing, for that olde Iacomin and Alexander loued together as Brothers. Whiles thus these two Louers held their demaunde in suspence, there fell a deadly iarre betwéene the house of the Iacomins and the family of the Bartolos: insomuch that not onely all Palermo, but almost all Sicilia was in an vproare, for each toke Armes against other, and being men of great Parentage, friendes toke partes, and they began to bandy, that they fell to a flatte ciuill dissention. This disagreement betweene the Parents, although it was a heart breake to the two Louers, yet could it not at all disparage their affection, but the greater the Mutinie the deeper was the impression of their mindes. But by this meanes their meeting was hindered: yet Loue being a priuie searcher of

secrets

secrets, found them out a creuise betwéne two walles, which parted their houses, and there oft times they met and parled, hoping stil some end would grow to this dismall dissention: but as the fier increaseth with the wind, so this iar grew greater by time, that the louers lost all hope euer to haue consent of parents: insomuch, that wholy in dispaire of an vnitie, they concluded to forsake Sicilia, and to goe into Spaine, where they had both friends, and there to remaine til their families were accorded. Upon this resolution, Iacomine prouides him a Barke, and laide it readie in the hauen, and when the winde and weather was faire, gaue a watchword to Katherine, and so got hir a bord, hoist sailes and away they made towards Spaine: they were not long gon, but they were mist, and by all possible coniectures knowne to be slipt away together, for diuers manifest instancies were reported of their loues. The fathers fell both into déepe passions, Iacomyn hauing but one Sonne, and Bartolo but one Daughter: yea the gréefe of their vnkind departure, did so worke in their Fathers mindes, that each intended more mischéefe to other, as it were in reuenge, that the broils grew hotter. But as they disséted, so these two Louers accorded euery way, looking for no other Hauen but the coast of Spaine: but fortune that delights to sport hir selfe in the variable accidents of loue, brought it thus to passe. They had not sailde thrée daies from Sicilia, but that there fell a great calme, and certaine Gallies that were Rouers vnder the king of Tmisa, espied this Sicilian ship: and thinking to haue some rich prise, made out and gaue onset, commaunding them to yéeld: the Sicilians, being calme, could not make way from them, but yet although too weake, stoutly denied to be bourded, and fought it out to the vttermost, chéefelie Iacomine, who was sore wounded: but at last, they of the Gallies entered, and bestowed the Mariners vnder hatches, and then went to rifle the Ship, where

they found Katherine al blubbered with teares, & almost dead for feare, hir they tooke for all hir pittifull shrikes and cries, conueyed hir into the Gallies: which Iacomin seeing, toke so heauily, that hee was readie to die for greefe: but so sore he was hurt, that stir he could not, but was faine to sucker hir to be carried away, whether the mercie of the slaues pleased to transport hir: when they had rifeled the ship, and found nothing but passengers, away they wēt with faire Katherine, determining with themselues to giue hir for a present to the king of Tunise whom they knew did loue a faire woman, more then halfe his kingdome, and so faire a creature as Katherine they were sure he neuer saw before. Vpon this they made saile towards Tunise, and when they were arriued, the captaine of the Gallies, causing hir to dresse hir in hir richest attire, wēt with hir to the Kings Palace, where when he was admitted to his Highnesse presence, humbly on his knées he craued pardon, as one that contrarie to his Maiesties lawes had bin a Rouer and a Pirate on the seas: but now loathing that course of life, was come to submit himselfe, & hauing taken that Gentlewoman as a prise at sea, desired his Maiestie to accept hir as a present. The king whiles the Pirate told his tale, kept his eye still on the Gentlewoman, whose beautie he foūd such, that he thought her some heauenly creature, shrowded in some mortall carcasse. The king not only thanked the Pirat for his present, but gaue him frē pardon, and a letter of mart, with many other rich gifts, so that he returned richly rewarded: and then turning him to Katherine, he toke hir in his armes, kist her, and gaue hir such entertainement as in all roialtie he could. But nothing could make hir cease off from teares, hauing still hir Iacomin in remembrance, whom she held for dead: which the King perceiuing, commaunded that she should be carried to a place of his, standing fast by the Cittie wall, and there placed and attended vpon with all diligence,

gence, vntill she might be comforted, and thither when it pleased him bee would haue recourse. Seated in that house, there she led a solitarie life, washing hir cheekes euery day with teares for hir poore Iacomin: who likewise wounded as he was, was brought to Tunise, and there left in the Surgions hand, where he was healed: assoone as he might well goe, he went as a man forlorne vp and downe the Cittie, looking euery where if hee might see his Katherine: whereupon he resolued to passe from place to place, and so to end his daies in trauell, if he did not by narrow inquisition finde hir out: getting therefore his bag and baggage in a readinesse, he was going out of Tunise; and as he passing out the gates, casting his eie vp to the house where Katherine was, who at that time was looking out of a casement, hee espied her, and thinking it should be she, stood in a mase: Katherine seeing him, and thinking him to be her Iacomin, was almost ready to fall downe in a sounde: thus stood the two Louers at gase; at last Iacomin cald Katherine: Iacomin (quoth she) and with that she clapt hir finger on hir mouth, and made a signe, that for that time he should depart. Backe againe went Iacomin to his Hostesse, as merry a man as might be, & there staid till it was something late in the euening, and then going to the place, sought round about the house, and there found a backe window into a Garden, where they might conueniently talke: he had not stayed there long, but Katherine came to the window, and there after a volly of sighes, quencht with teares, they began to discourse their fortunes since their departure: Katherine told Iacomin how she was giuen by the Pirates to the King for a present, and how he had placst hir there, reseruing hir for one of his Concubines, and that shee looked euery houer, when he should come to defloure hir. Therefore quoth she, since wee are man and wife, as wee haue liued together, so let vs dye together, and enioye thou the

chastity

chastitie of that body, whose soule hath bene euer thine in all amitie: I respect not the King, nor what his tortures can do, therefore at night come hither to this place when it is darke, climbe vp on the wall, and so on this tree, and thou maist easilie come into the casement, which for the same purpose thou shalt find open. At this motion Iacomin was glad, and so departed, and at the time appointed came: and being made more nimble by loue and desire, he lept vp the wall lightly, and so into the tree, and from thence into the casement, where hee found his Katherine ready to receiue him, banquet him she could not, least any might heare, but feast he did with kisses, or whatsoeuer she might afford to his amorous desires, so that in the end, to bed they went, and there with pleasure recompensed their former misfortunes. Loue hauing thus aduanced hir champion; Fortune enuying their happinesse, ment to haue one fling more at them, and brought it so to passe, that the King that night resolued to haue the companie of Katherine, and therefore after all his Lordes were at rest, toke with him his Chamberlaine, and certaine of his Garde, and went to his place where she lay, comming in by a backe gate, hauing keyes for euery doore, at last opened the Chamber where she was, and there drawing the curtens to behold his Goddesse, he saw where she lay with a yongman in hir armes fast a sleepe: the king for anger was ready to haue kild them, but yet he did qualifie his furie with a royall patience: and called his Chamberlaine, and the rest of his Garde, and shewed them this sight, demanding of them if any of them knew the yong man: they all answered, no, but supposed he was some stranger. The King straight commaunded, that certaine of his Garde should watch them, and assoone as they awakt, carry them to prison, and let there in the midst of the market place be erected a great stake, and in the aforne one, there let them be both consumed with fier: the

Garde

gard obeied the Kings commaundement, & hee went away in great choller, and highlie discontented. The King departed, these louers slept swetelie till the morning, and then they awoke, where present they heard a rustling of men, who straight tould them how ỳ King was there, what had hapned, and what hee had commaunded: therefore they made them rise, & then bound them and carried them away. The two louers were no whit dismaied at this newes, but imbracing & kissing each other, comforted themselues in this, ỳ they should, as they lined together so die together, and ỳ their soules nor bodies should neuer part. Straight were they caried to prison, & the stake was on prouiding, wherupon the rumour of their burning came about the cittie, that against the hower appointed all the cittie were gathered together, and forth at last was Iacomine and Catherin brought, and bound to the stake backe to backe: They earnestlie desired ỳ they might be bound face to face, but it could not be granted, which greeued thē: but they cōforted themselues with cheerful words, resolued to suffer death with patience. Al the cittie was gathered together, & stood gasing on them, & pittying them, that so sweete a couple should fall in such fatal extremitie: the poore soules ashamed, and hanging downe their heads expecting euerie minute the beginning of their martirdome: As thus the fire was readie to be brought came the Lord high Admirall of Tunyse bye, and seeing such a concourse, demaunded the cause: The people tould him as much as they knew. He on his footcloth came to the stake, and loking vpon them seeing them so louely, asked of them of what Countrey they were. Of Sycilia sir quoth Iacomine. With that ỳ Admiral staring him earnestlie in the face called to his remembrance the fauour of old Iacomine his father. Of what place in Sicilia? my friend quoth he: of Palermo: thy name quoth the Admiral: Iacomin quoth he: why thou art not (answered the Lord) the sonne of Iacomin Pierro? yes quoth he, and

this the daughter of Alexander Bartolo: And if quoth Iacomine you knew those families, do but so much for vs as speake to the king, that wee may be bound face to face, & so die, for life that we hold in skorne. Although the tormētors were appointed to dispatch thē by an howr, yet the L. Admirall charged them not to put any fire to ỳ wood til his return; which they promisd: & away gallops ỳ Admiral as a mad man through ỳ strætes to ỳ Kings palace, where when he came, he found ỳ king in a great rage, discoursing to his Lords the villany of Catherin, ỳ admitted a stranger into her. The Admiral without any great reuerence, as a man ful of choller began thus roughlie and brieflie. Can they which place kinges pull down kings? Then looke thou once againe to be beaten out of Tunyse: did Iacomine Pierro & Alexander Bartolo the two valiāt Lords of Sicilia by their force seat thée in thy kingdome? and now in reuenge dost thou burne the onelie issue of them both? for that two louers seeke the fruition of their loues, so shal wee haue Sicilia our enemies, and thou séeke a new kingdome. What meanest thou to vse these railing speeches quoth the King? Marie quoth the Admiral, yonder yong gentleman that is at the stake is ỳ son of Iacomin, & she the daughter of Bartolo. At this the king stood in amaze, & was halfe afraid, so that he cryed out to his Lords, ỳ they should rū & bring the couple as they were to him: which they performed with all diligence. When Iacomine and Catherin saw the nobles come, then they lookt for the fire: but when they heard how they must bee vnlosed, and how curteouslie they were intreated, hope of better fortune gaue them some comfort. Well, away they were caried to the king, who graciouslie intertaining them, demaūded the cause of their bould enterprise, and what fortune brought them into such a far countrey. Iacomine straight began and discourst their particular hap, and what accident they had, whose sonnes they were, and what was their contrarie fortunes. The king at this

embraced

embraſt them both, welcomd them, and craued pardon of his raſh cenſure, cladding them in roial apparel, and inryching them with manie coſtlie giftes, after ſolemplie married them in Tuniſe, and kept a great feaſt with turney and triumphes fitting their degrees, and after preparing a prettie Fleet, ſent them home to their parentes by the Lord Admiral: whoſe arriual in Palermo was wonderful ſtrange, in that all thought they were dead. But when they recounted to their parents their miſfortunes, and laſt the gracious fauoures of the King of Tuniſe, by the helpe and good perſwaſion of the Lord Admirall; the inſtance of their true loue reconciled their fathers and families, that not onelie the two louers agreed, but the two houſes euer after continued in peace and concord.

Aſſoone as the ſcholler had tould his tale, euerie man thanckt him for his paines, and ſaid it was a pleaſant and a delightfull hiſtorie: amongeſt the reſt there was an old woman, who for verie kindneſſe to heare of their hard haps, and the good fortunes of the louers, wept: why weepe you mother quoth the Cobler? by my troth ſonne quoth ſhee, to thinke on the chaunces of loue which are ſo variable, & by the grace of God if all in the barge will giue mee leaue, you ſhal heare an old woman tell a tale that will make you all merie. Euerie man deſired hir to ſay on: and ſhe being a ſimple woman, as you ſhal perceiue by hir deſcription, ſetled hir ſelfe to hir talke thus.

The deſcription of the old Woman.

CRooked was this beldam for age,
Huffe ſhouldred, and of a wrinckled viſage:

And

And as hir backe and necke was croked,
So was hir nose long and hooked.
Manie forrowes in hir brow,
Hairy, and bristled like a Sow.
Shee had a large tawny face,
And therein an il fauored grace.
Shee was mouthed like a Sparrow,
Gated like a wheelebarow,
And of long time before
Not a tooth in hir head had she borne,
Yet could she chew good ale,
For her nose was nothing pale,
But with swinking at hir will
Shee lookt red about the gill.
Mickle talke she had and mickle chat
When with hir Gossips she sat,
That threescore yeares before
The bell for gossipping she bore.
Hir apparell was after the elder bere,
Hir cassocke aged some fiftie yere:
Graie it was, and long before
The wool from the threedes was worne.
A thrumbe hat she had of red
Like a bushel on her head.
Hir kercher hung from vnder her cap
With a taile like a flie flap,
And tied it was with a whim wham,
Knit vp againe with a trim tram,
Much like an Egiptian.
Hir sleeues blew, hir traine behind
With siluer hookes was tucked I find,
Hir shooes broad and forked before,
None such saw I of yore.
This beldam on hir merrie pin
Began hir tale with this gin.

The old wiues tale,

Conteining the wilie sleightes of a wanton wife, and how both cunninglie and craftilie to the safety of her owne honestie, and hir husbandes discredite, shee shifted hir louer.

IN a farre countrey there dwelled sometime a gentleman of good parentage, called signior Myzaldo, who had to his wife a verie faire and beautifull gentlewoman. And as the beastes most greedilie gase at ỳ Panthers skin, & the birdes at the Peacocks plumes: so euery fair feminine face is an adamant to draw ỳ obiect of mens eies to behold the beauties of women: experience proued it true in the wife of Myzaldo, for she being a woman of singular perfection and proportion, was generallie looked on and liked of al, but fauoured and loued especiallie of a yong gentleman called Peter, dealing with such secrecie, that they continuallie satisfied their desires without giuing signior Myzaldo the least occasion of suspition; and the meanes that they performed it with such secrecie was this. Euerie weeke twise hir husband rid from home about certaine his affaires, and she very artificially neere to the high way that leads to the towne where Peter lay, had placed an asses head vpon a tree, and when hir husband was gone forth, she tourned ỳ head towards the town; but when he was at home, then she alwaies had it loking to hir own house: using herein as some thought, an Embleame, saying, when she turnd the Asses head forth, that the Asse hir husbande with the long horning eares was gone from home; and when it stood towards the howse, that the Asse kept his chamber: but what soeuer in this hir conceit was, Peter alwaies knew when to come, and euer when Myzaldo was from home resorted to his house. Now it chanced that certaine boyes comming by and seeing the Asses head stand there, threw stones

at it, & hit it so often, ỳ at last they turned the Asses head towards ỳ town: which Peter walking abroad & spying, thought ỳ Myzaldo had bin gone from home: & therfore at night walked towards his louers house, & comming to the doze finding it shut, accozding to his accustomed maner, knockt: ỳ good wife awakt, heard him & was sozе afraid ỳ hir husband should heare him, and so lay still: by and by he knockt again moz lowd: Myzaldo awoke, & hearing this, asked of his wife who it was that rapt at the dowze, oz what ỳ knocking meant: Oh husband quoth she, be stil, it is a foule spirit ỳ haunles this house, & yet hetherto we neuer durst reueale it, and it hath, thanks be to God, bin your good fortune neuer to hear it befoze: Myzaldo rycher by far then he was wise, beleeued his wife, & askt hir if it had done any harme: no quoth shee, foz I had learnd a charm to send it hence: frier Rowlād learnd me it, and if it knocke againe, you and I wil goe down together, & I wil say my charme, & so we shal liue at rest. Peter ỳ thought som other frend had bin with his Lēman, taking it in scozn ỳ hir husband (as he thought) being frō home he should not be let in, knockt againe amaine. With ỳ Myzaldo & his wife arose, lighted a candle, & went downe to the doze where Peter was: Then she wisht hir husband to knēele downe vpon his knees while she said the charme. With that she began thus.

Spirit spirit get thee hence,
For here is no residence:
Here thou maist not be
This night to trouble me,
For my husband and I
Safe in our beds must lie,
Therfore from hence goe
And trouble me no mo.

Now husband quoth she, spit: & with that he spit, and Peter laught hartily, and wisht he might spit out his teeth foz being at home. This charme said shee thrise o-

ner.

uer, and euery time made him spit, that Peter might be assuredly perswaded that hir husband was at home. Upon this Myzaldo and his wife went to bed, and heard the spirit no more: for Peter wēt laughing home to his lodging. Myzaldo could not slæpe this night, nor many nights after, but still marueling what this spirit should be, lay awoke. Peter that once or twise thus was deceiued of the asse head, because by som cōtrary mishap it was turnd, deuised thus: ỳ euery night when Myzaldos wife wēt to bed she should tie a string to hir toe, & then leaue the ende of it at the doze, so that when Peter came he might wake hir, & then if she puld the string againe & tied it fast, hir husband was from home: if she let it slip, then he was in bed. Thus by the means of this string Myzaldo was oft made cuckold, and sometimes when hir husband was at home & in his sound slæpe, if Peter puld the string, she would rise & go down to him to the doze. At last so thus this game continued, that Myzaldos wife being fast a slæpe, and he rising to find ỳ chamber pot stumbled vpon ỳ string, and wondzing what it ment, or to what end groped easilie & found it tied to his wiues toe, and from thence reacht to the doze. He, as simple as he was, coniectured, that this was done to make him cuckold, and therefore for that night said nothing: but against the next night had prouided a great Partisan by his beds side: and when his wife was fast a slæpe he vntied the string, and tyed it to his owne toe; hee had not slumbzed a little, but hee felt the string pull easilie, whereupon hee puld againe, and then Peter thought assuredlie that hee was gone from home, whereupon he knockt. Then did Myzaldo rise, put on his cloathes, and tooke the partizan in his hand, and downe hee went rustling that his wife wakt, and hearing him go down so hastilie felt for the string that was at hir toe, & mist it: whereupon she perceiued hir husband had found out the deceipt, and whipping out of the bed ran down the staires: with that Myzaldo opened the doze and thought to haue taken Peter, but hee hauing a glaunce of him being in a dark night came away, & Mizaldo after him, and raised

the

the watch, yet was Peter so light of foot, that he out rã them al, & escapt. Mizaldoes wife fearing the worst ran vp againe to hir maid, & wild hir to goe to hir bed, and lie there, & to abide whatsoeuer hir husband should do to hir, & shæ would giue hir a new gowne & a new petticote. The wench was content and went to her maisters bed: scarse was she warm there, but vp came Mizaldo in a great rage, & straight laying down his partizan fel to beating of his wife, and with a whipcord all to lasht hir bodie, that the blood ran downe the shætes: and when he had done, in the darke groped, & found a paire of shears & clipt off all the haire of hir head: and that done, opened the doore and went his way. The wench almost kild with blowes, and sore pained with smart lay stil as one in a traunce: but assoon as euer Mizaldo was gone, his wife arose and shut the doore, and came to the wench, where shee comforted and washt hir, & annointed her, putting on cleane linnen vpon hir, & laid cleane shætes on the bed, and so sate downe discontented at hir work. No sooner did the day breake but signior Mizaldo went with all spæd to his mother in lawe, and there reuealed to hir and to his wiues brethren how his wife had delt with him, and how he had reuenged hir, yet not sufficientlie, but was fullie resolued to bring hir this day before the Magistrate, & so absolutely to make a diuorce: the mother fel to weeping, and knowing hir own fault when shee was young, intreated hir sonnes that they would make a peace & attonemẽt betweene their sister and hir husband: they fell to exclaime against hir, and said, seeing she was by hir lightnes the discredit of hir house, they would be the first and the formost in punishing such grosse offences. Vpon this they went home with Myzaldo to his house, and there comming vp the staires they found their daughter sitting verie sad: the husband frownd and bretheren scoulded, but ỳ mother whom nature more nerely toucht, said, what chære daughter? what stir is this betweene your husband & you? what stir quoth hir daughter? marrie I would you & my brethren had gone to my burying whẽ you went to my mariage to wed mee to a dronkard, that all day goes out

about

about whores and curtisans, and at night comes home late, and perhaps not all night, as he hath doone now, and so doo I sit all day comfortlesse, and lie in the night like a widow while he is abroad with his strumpets. And quoth the mother he is this morning come to your brethren and me, with an outcrie against you, that this night he tooke you with a Lemman at the doore, and how he found it out by a string tied to your toe. Fie vpon him dronkard (quoth she) these are his dreames, when he lies tipled in the Tauerne: but I maruell where he hath bene to night: marry Dame quoth he, I feare me your flesh and your bones knowe too well, for I thinke you haue not one free spot on your body, I so whipt you for your whoredome, and I thinke the sheetes in the bed can witnesse, and the haire that I cut off your head can testifie. Now mother (quoth she) and good brethren, see whether this is an arrand dronkard or not, that tels these fables, saying, he beat me thus to night, when he toucht me not, nor before this time since yesterday morning, came within these doores: where he saies the sheetes are bloudie, see brethren see, they are cleane: for my skin, take view of it, if it be any way toucht: and for my haire, see how faire and long it is: how hath he then done these prankes? alas, alas, he hath falne amongst his whores in his drunkennesse, and hath vsed them so, and now to the slander of me, to the dishonour of my frends, and the perpetuall infamis of our house, he hath thus without cause reuiled me, where yee see his owne lying tong condemnes him. Mizaldo, seeing neither his wiues haire cut, nor hir bodie any way bruised, fell into a great dumpe, wondering whether he dreampt it or no, in so much, that at last he askt: whie Wife? was I not this night at home? at home, in faith sir no, but with some of your drabs, & I thinke thou camest home dronke. At this doubtful demaund, hir brethren began to take hir part, & seeing what he said was false, & al hir speeches probable, they raild on him in most bitter termes, & told him in that he had maried their sister who was an honest womã, & he by all means sought to depriue hir of hir good name without cause, who should be ỹ

protector of hir honor, they would not put it vp vnreuenged, but would to the vttermost do him what iniurie the extremitie of the law would afford. Vpon this, the man séeing how in all things his wife had disproued him, thought assuredly that he was not at home the last night, and therfore desired hir to pardon him, and he would neuer after be takē in the like offence, and so vpon that, by hir mother and hir brethren they were made friends, and euer after Peter and she with lesse suspition enioyed their loues.

The old wife hauing tould hir tale, euery man began to commend the wit of a woman, who on the sudden is euer most quick, & percing, able so sone to yéld a peremptorie excuse, as the occasion is ministred. By that they had told this tale, they were within sight of Grauesend: whereupon they thought to haue giuen ouer, but that a Somner sat by, who was a pleasant fellow; and he began thus. Gentlemen séeing at the motion of the Cobler, we haue imitated ould Father Chaucer, hauing in our little Barge, as he had in his trauell sundry tales, and amongst the rest, the old wiues tale, that you shall not want the merriest knaue of all the Somners, you shall heare what I can say; and to kéepe decorum, as the Cobler began with the tale of a Prior, I will end with one of an Abbot: they all thankt him heartily, and he began thus: But first I must, as hitherto I haue done all, describe him.

The description of the Somner.

THis Somner was not very old,
Of a countenance stout and bold:
That would against the truth wage,
For he had a shameleſſe visage.
Squint eyed he was, and his head
Was bad hued, bloud red:
A nose he had that gan show,
What liquor he loued I trow.
For he had before long seauen yeare,

Beene

Beene of the towne the Ale conner.
His face was full of pretious ſtone,
Richer in Inde was neuer none:
For Rubie, Pearle, and Chryſolite,
With them all his face was dight
From the brow to the very chin,
Yet to drinke he would neare lin:
But ſwincked with all his might,
At euery houſe where he did ſite.
His conditions were faire and good,
For why he was by the roode
Acquainted with rich and eke with poore,
And kend well euery kerne whore,
Or other wife that held no ſcorne
To make hir huſband were the horne.
Such a knaue he was indeed,
That as true as my creede,
He cited euery woman to the law,
Euen for the valew of a ſtraw.
And ſommon them to appeare
At the bawdy court as I leere:
Where for money the Somner
Would all their faults cleere:
That they ſhould not appeare at all,
Before the officiall.
A Bawd he was, a teltale, and a knaue,
Sike an other it is ſeld to haue,
Vnleſſe a man ſhould hell rake,
There to finde out his make.
Yet gan he thus declare,
How the Abbot of Wickam did fare.

¶ The Somners tale,
Conteining the ſhifts that the Abbot made to haue his loue, and how he raiſd a man from death.

IN Wickham there was an Abbot, that was a man of a middle age, luſtie and frolike, and coueted to

acquaint himselfe with all the faire Wiues of the Towne, insomuch that euery man doubted of this iolly Clarke: yet he made himselfe holy, but do what he could, it might not cléere the suspition that the men of the towne had of him: Amongst the rest, hee was acquainted with a Farmars Wife, that was none of the wisest, and yet he had witte enough to beware of the Abbot. This Farmar exceeded all the rest, not onely of the Towne, but of all the whole countrie about for iealousie, being so suspitious of his Wife, that he would broke none of his neighbours to come into his house, and if she glanced hir lokes neuer so little awry, he would straight beate hir while he could stand ouer hir, in so much, that the woman was wearie of hir life, and loked as a creature forlorne.

As shée was one daye walking into the fields to doe hir businesse, the Abbot met hir, who toke hir by the hand, and began to make loue to hir: she was both coie and fearefull: yet at last the Abbot gan so prattle, that shee began to tell him how iealous hir husband was, and how wearie shée was of hir life. Tushe (quoth the Abbot) care not for that, referre that matter to mee, I will straight cure him of his iealousie, if then thou wilt bee my paramour. So sore was the poore woman troubled with a iealous foole, that shee was glad to graunt whatsoeuer the Abbot would aske, so hir husband might bee mended of his fault: make some excuse quoth the Abbot, send him to me to morrow, and then let me alone: but whatsoeuer thou heares is befallen him, feare not, all shall be well. Upon that the Farmars Wife and the Abbot parted, shee to hir house, he to his cloister, where hee called one of his Monkes, in whome he did repose all his trust, and reuealed vnto him the whole matter, and what plot hee had laid to bring his purpose to passe: the Moonke condiscended to doe whatsoeuer the Abbot should commaund, and so vpon this resolution they laught, and the next day came the Farmar to the Abbot to haue a hie masse said for one of his Children that was sick: the Abbot made much of him, and bad him to

dinner,

dinner, and subtilly at his last draught conueied a dormatiue potion into the cup, that presently after dinner he fell into a dead sléepe; that his senses being gone all men thought he was deade: wherefore presently one of the Monkes ran to the good wife, and tolde hir what had happened to hir husband: shée cried out and wrung hir hands, and tolde it to hir neighbours: whereupon shée and a great company both of men and women went to the Abbey, and there was hee knit vp in his winding sheete, the wife pittifully lamented, and the neighbours comforted hir: the Abbot he saide he should be buried in their Abbey because he died there, and therefore in presence of them all solemnely buried him: which done, his wife like a sorrowfull woman departed home to hir house with hir neighbours.

Assone as night came, the Abbot and the Monke, (whom hee had made priuy to this practise) went and cunningly toke him out of his graue, and carried him into a déepe dungeon, where he could sée no light, and there let him lie starke naked, till such time as the potion had ended the operation, and that hee should wake. At length the Farmar awoke, and stretching himselfe, finding that he was naked, and in a place lothsome, darke, and fearefull, he could not tel what to thinke, but blest himselfe, and said, Lord haue mercie vpon me, where am I? The Monke that was by attired like a spirite, saide, thou art deade and in purgatory. Deade quoth the Farmer: can dead men speak? Yea quoth the Monke, and eat too, such meate and drinke as is appointed for the dead: This day in the morning thou didst die, and thy wife did bury thée in the Abbey, accompanied with all hir neighbours: and I wretch a spirite of purgatorie, am appointed to torment thée without ceasing, for that in thy life time thou wert iealous, and didst misuse thy wife without cause, therefore am I appointed to bere thée threescore and tenne yeares without ceasing: and with that hauing a whippe in his hande, the Monke laide it on, and gaue him many a shrewde blowe: At last he left him and went his way, and told the Abbot what he had done.

The Abbot as ſone as conuenient leyſure woulde ſerue, ſtole ſecretly to the Farmers houſe, and there got to bed to the good wife, and euery night lay with hir while hir huſband was in purgatorie: and euery day the Monke went down and allowed him a little pittance of meat and drinke: but whipt him moſt miſerably. At laſt the Farmer grew to be maruellous penitent and repentant for his faults, ſwearing that if he were aliue againe, he would neuer be iealous nor ſuſpitious: earneſtly praying his wife that ſhée woulde forgiue him. While thus the poore Farmer was in his purgatory almoſt whipt to death, and famiſht, the Abbot and his wife liued in all pleaſure and iolity, laughing when they heard the Monke report what the poore man ſaid in his purgatory: At laſt ſhée perceiued that ſhée was with child, & therfore they muſt néeds haue a father for it, wherupon they deuiſed to haue him out of purgatorie, and to bring him home with a miracle. The next day the Monke came to him according to his accuſtomed manner, and whipt him not, but told him that his wife euery day offred a Taper for him, and ſaid ſo many good praiers, that his ſinnes were remitted, and his puniſhment forgiuen: whereupon hee thankt his wife and made a vow, if God ſhould reſtore him to life (as it was impoſſible) he would not onely leaue to be iealous himſelfe, but warne all other men to take héede of the like fault. Thus continued hee without whipping by the ſpace of fiue or ſixe daies, and at laſt the Monke in ſtead of drinke, gaue him an other dormatiue potion, ſo that he fell a ſléepe.

Then the Abbot and the Monke in the night conueied him into the place where hee was buried, and ſo let him lie. About the houre when hee knewe hee would wake, was the Monke there, fayning himſelfe at praier: and aſſoone as euer he ſaw him ſtir, he ranne away and cried out: vpon this all the Monkes of the Cloiſter roſe, and aſkt what the matter was. Oh quoth hee, as I was in praier by the Farmers graue, I heard a tumbling and a voice there either of him or of a ſpirite: with that the Monkes went downe and found that there was one aliue within the Tombe: then they

called

called the Abbot and tolde him, who slipping on his night gowne, ran apace to sée the miracle: when he came there, and they were all gathered together, they lifted vp the stone, and there lay he tumbling in his sheete: so they toke him out and vndid him, and he loked wan and gash, but spake to them and tolde them, that the Lorde at the prayers of his wife had restored him to life, and that hee had béene in purgatory, and what punishment hee had abidden for his iealousie. The Monkes were proude of this miracle, and knewe that their Abbey should bee more famous for this strange wonder, and straight sent for his wife and his neighbours: who when they came, first the Abbot reuealed vnto them, howe that hee and his Monkes hearing the continuall plaintes and prayers the poore widow made for hir husband; he did likewise with earnest Orisons intreat of God, that if it were his wil, he would shew a miracle in him, and restore him to life: and nowe my Maisters and friendes quoth hee, sée the difference betwéene the prayers of an Abbot, and the prayers of a lay man: for follow me and you shall sée what effect they haue taken. With that he carried them into the parlor where the Farmer was, assone as they sawe him, they were all amazed, and his wife fel down in a sound: whereupon reuiuing hir he began to say, feare not wife, nor you gentle neighbours, & doubt not of me, for I am by this holy man and my wiues prayers restored to life hauing béene in that most vile place of purgatory where there is nothing but darkenes and Deuils: there I haue tormented for all my sinnes, but especially for my iealousy being euery day punisht till my wiues prayers deliuerd me; many a fable beside of his owne inuention declared to them he had séene in purgatory. At last as he vowed to reform his wife fell about his necke and kist him, every one pleasd & all the neighbours reioiced, and diuers praisd the Abot for his holines. Vpon this he and his wife reconciled, walked him home to his house solemly proclaming thanks & there left him. This newes was cause of great gaine by the Abbot of Wickam who grew famous in that country, that al men had him in reuerance as very

holy

holy and vertuous, and diuers came to sée the Farmer from farre: all which he did certifie what he had séen in purgatory, what great punishment for sundry sinnes but especially for iealousie. Thus he not onely exhorted all men from suspition of their wiues, but euer after gaue his wife such libertie, that shée might at yir owne pleasure be familiar with the Abbot.

The Somner hauing told his tale, the people commended the great deuotion of the Abbot, wishing all iealous fooles to passe the like purgatory. The Cobler hee commended all, and said, that they were now welcome to Graues end: euery man to his purse & lookt in it for his two pence to pay his fare: and when they had done, they rose and went into the towne to drinke: and because they went most of them to Caunterburie, they went all to one Inne, where they beganne to descant and discourse of the tales that had past: I can quoth the Cobler remember them all, & very néere verbatim collect & gather them together: which by the grace of God gentlemen, I meane to doe, and then to set them out in a pamphlet vnder mine owne name, as an inuectiue against Tarltons newes out of Purgatorie: and then if you please to send to the Printer, I wil leaue a token, that euery one of you that tolde a tale, shall haue a Booke for his labour. In the meane time till I haue perfected it I'll laye my Coblers stoole aside, and my selfe become an Author. I hope you shall finde mee so fichent in mine English, if I would study you would report I might for my Wit vie a Lilly, Greene, or any other in excellency of stile. they all laught, paid their shot, and went with the merry Cobler towards Caunterburie.

NIS.